UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
FACULDADE DE LETRAS

THE ABSENCE OF INDIFFERENCE

Alberto Miguel Antunes Arruda

Orientador: Prof. Doutor Miguel Bénard da Costa Tamen

Tese especialmente elaborada para obtenção do grau de Doutor no ramo de Estudos de Literatura e Cultura, na especialidade de Teoria da Literatura

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THE ABSENCE OF INDIFFERENCE
ALBERTO ARRUDA

For Sara

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Abstract / Resumo

This thesis addresses the concept of indifference and its moral implications – indifference to other people, indifference to ourselves and indifference to what is around us. The thesis begins with an argument that considers the connections between the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of action, attempting to lay bare, and therefore avoid, the pitfalls of reductionist tendencies. The argument is then expanded to the topic of political philosophy, showing the heritage of this reductionist thinking as a form of personal elimination present in some political theories. At this point, the argument turns to the assessment of the moral importance of reciprocity, analyzing such notions as to accuse someone, to confess before someone, to forgive someone and to help someone.

Esta tese consiste numa tentativa de interpretar moralmente o conceito de indiferença – ou seja, indiferença em relação a outras pessoas, a nós próprios ou aquilo que nos rodeia. A tese começa com um argumento acerca das várias relações entre a filosofia da mente e a filosofia da acção, de forma a tentar evidenciar, e evitar, as tendências reducionistas inerentes a ambas as disciplinas.
O argumento é de seguida alargado à filosofia política, de forma a demonstrar que o eliminativismo presente em muitas teorias políticas é o justo herdeiro do reducionismo anteriormente tratado. A tese oferece no final uma interpretação do conceito de reciprocidade, analisando noções morais como as de acusar alguém, confessar-se perante alguém, perdoar alguém e ajudar alguém.

A Ausência da Indiferença: um resumo

Esta tese começa por restabelecer a relação entre a filosofia da mente e a filosofia da acção. Restabelecer esta ligação, com propriedade, implica construir um argumento capaz de apontar as insuficiências de uma putativa separação teórica; isto é, implica apontar para as insuficiências de uma forma particular de reducionismo. O argumento tenta estabelecer esta forma particular de reducionismo enquanto uma ameaça à apreensão correcta de uma pessoa, assim como das suas acções. O argumento é, desta forma, alargado a questões filosóficas sobre identidade pessoal, responsabilidade moral e raciocínio prático.

Este alargamento implica uma revisão de certos conceitos filosóficos; conceitos esses que constituem, em larga medida, os vocabulários da filosofia da mente e da filosofia da acção. Esta revisão visa devolver um contexto intacto a estes conceitos através da explicitação da ameaça reducionista. Por este motivo, é necessário oferecer uma explicação daquilo que é obliterado por esta forma de reducionismo, isto é, é necessário descrever a saliência moral daquilo que é obliterado.

O argumento aborda, em seguida, a relação entre as acções de um agente em particular e a sua identidade pessoal: o seu devir. Esta relação é tratada a partir dos conceitos de vocação e impedimento. Neste momento do argumento, torna-se necessário abordar alguns conceitos, por exemplo, o conceito de aspiração, como tendo uma função vital para a filosofia da mente. A proposta para a expansão do vocabulário da filosofia da mente acontece, por isso, devido a uma estrita necessidade expressiva e filosófica.

O conceito de vocação – a dignidade de uma pessoa em particular – serve de transição para uma discussão sobre o conceito de dependência e tirania. Discuto em primeiro lugar as formas de associação política que visam captar a dignidade de uma pessoa em particular sem evitar a sua situação numa sociedade política – nomeadamente, o conceito de consciência de classe. Este conceito é interpretado de forma a evidenciar a tendência para a eliminação pessoal que herda, de forma relevante, o reducionismo anteriormente tratado.

A ideia de tirania aprece, por sua vez, enquanto a perversão da forma de dependência inerente à espécie humana; ou seja, enquanto herdeira de uma forma de reducionismo que elimina a vocação individual. As ideias de poder e personalidade

são neste momento abordadas, e é oferecida uma justificação para a herança teológica destes conceitos. No entanto, a herança teológica é simplesmente reconhecida, e aparece neste argumento como subserviente à interpretação filosófica dos textos que implicam estes conceitos. Em nenhum momento é feito um tratamento teológico exaustivo dos conceitos, em vez disso, o argumento aborda textos filosóficos que usam os conceitos de *poder* e *personalidade* reiteradamente, tentando, sistematicamente, eliminar a sua dívida à teologia.

O último capítulo aborda o conceito de reciprocidade enquanto principal ideia moral, e por isso política, relevante para o restabelecimento de uma forma intacta de dependência humana. O argumento oferece uma interpretação da *Fenomenologia do Espírito* de G.W.F. Hegel, que demonstra a importância da revisão feita por Hegel da representação do conceito de virtude a partir da filosofia de Aristóteles. Neste momento, o argumento trata de questões como acusar uma outra pessoa, confessar-se perante outra pessoa, ajudar e preocupar-se com uma outra pessoa; oferecendo assim uma representação inerentemente dialógica, tanto da posse, como da aquisição de virtudes.

O argumento tenta concluir que a ausência de indiferença é a vocação possível de ser revelada à espécie humana.

Keywords / Palavras-Chave:

Action – Mind – Becoming – Impediments – Indifference – Reciprocity – Elimination

Acção – Mente – Devir – Impedimentos – Indiferença – Reciprocidade – Eliminação

The Absence of Indifference

The thread that unifies this thesis is the concept of indifference – indifference to oneself, indifference to others, indifference to history and, finally, indifference to the world around us. This concept is defined in its various aspects as the thesis progresses.

My notion of indifference occupies a position within a family of concepts that is distinctively Hegelian. Indifference is the absence of recognition and it is the aim of proper philosophical work to reveal it as a threat. Nevertheless, it is not from Hegel that I started this thesis or, for that matter, my thinking.

The thesis starts with an enquiry concerning the relation between human action and the human mind. The first five chapters are a reading of Anscombe's *Intention*. I have made an effort to read this difficult text as an essay on the philosophy of mind, rather than in a more contemporary way, that is, as action theory. The reason for this resides in my resistance to use this text as a powerful argument inside a contemporary contention concerning the proper definition of *an action*. My intuition since I first encountered this text was, instead, a Wittgensteinian one: The text seeks to give a proper context back to the concepts pertaining to the philosophy of mind. The path from having intentions to actions is to be understood as a particular case of Wittgenstein's *don't think but look!*

To reestablish this context carries a considerable weight attached to it. Not only does a proper conception of an action emerge as an explanation of what it is to have an intention, so does a rather substantial notion of agency. Of course, when I say that I try to stand to the side of the contemporary discussion surrounding *Intention*, I do not mean to imply that I do so because I find anything wrong with it. Quite to the contrary, I do wish to contribute to the present discussion. Nevertheless it is my belief that to address the idiom used in *Intention* is to move from a particular philosophy of mind towards an understanding of the place of morality in human life. If I am permitted to borrow a notion from Althusser's reading of *Capital*, I believe that the path from Anscombe's texts to Anscombe's philosophy will imply the consideration of all the concerns that occupy her in that particular text.

For this reason, the first five chapters are mostly occupied with addressing the idiom of *Intention*, working evermore towards a manifest theory of agency. For that purpose I often went back to the predecessor of *Intention* – the *Philosophical Investigations*. I believe that it becomes clear that the way from *having intentions* to *actions* is paved by a characteristically Wittgensteinian concern: the philosophical conception of an autonomous mind and its contents threatens our understanding of the place of these ideas in our lives. To reestablish this wider context is to answer Anscombe´s *starting point* for a philosophy of mind, which is to address the complexity of all the concepts pertaining to the philosophy of mind in trivial contexts so as to avoid the danger of reductionism (being that the sin of reductionism is not its explanatory economy and elegance but rather its elimination of what we commonly, in a familiar sense, call persons). Therefore, I have everywhere attempted to preserve that very Wittgensteinian *animus*: *to think of a human mind is to think of a world and a human body*.

This idea qualifies extensively the way my reading of *Intention* progressed. I have read *Intention* as another example of what Sebastian Rödl called *a true materialism* (his paraphrase of Marx's *non-contemplative materialism*).[1] And I, too, found the expression of such ideas, not only in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, but also, and perhaps in a more systematic way, in the first volume of *Capital*. The *Capital* sought to capture the actions of a particular mode of production in its *wider* implications. I believe it is no coincidence that the project of the *Capital* can be described in such terms, nor is it that Marx's attempt in the *Theses on Feuerbach* is reconcilable with Anscombe's concerns in her essay on the First Person.

Marxism had trouble in reconciling the optimism its political project demands with its revolutionary mode of action. It is therefore no surprise that the eliminativism we find in subsequent versions of Marxism is not altogether different from the sort of behaviorism Anscombe addresses at the beginning of *Intention* – there is a family of concepts shared by both political philosophy and the philosophy of mind, these are concepts pertaining to the topic of human action: prediction, individual, movement, etc.

[1] *Self-Consciousness*, p.122.
[2] 'Leninism or Marxism' in *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 80-82.

Section five introduces what I argue is the outcome of a reading of *Intention*. It is also, coextensively, an attempt at making sense of some of the issues Feuerbach addressed in *The Essence of Christianity*.

A theory of *manifest agency* ought to address the issues raised by an understanding of action that intends to absorb what is revealed by one's doings. I have tried to make apparent how the exercise of our vocations becomes pertinent to a complete understanding of our minds. How what we do and who we are is essentially connected in a primitive way.

Feuerbach understood the essential connection between the concept of a personal limit and that of one's existence. But more valuable to me is the context in which he established this connection. It is not possible for a person to aspire to be someone beyond his own personal limits without incurring a serious personal distortion. This being said, I cannot but admit that I do not find this truth particularly useful when put to the service of explaining what is supposed to be the false conception held by a religious mind regarding what it believes in. Here we are reminded of Marx's *Theses*: Feuerbach's contemplative materialism implies a contemplative anthropology and psychology. I was therefore concerned with making sense of the notion of *vocation* as containing the concepts of *achievement* and *failure*. I believe these concepts emerge at the very end of *Intention* when we are asked to understand the moral failure of St. Peter. I have sought to argue that these concepts stand as the *sine qua non* of a personal history, that is, as the essential link between personality and action.

Chapter six starts with an appreciation of the position one occupies in doing political and moral philosophy. It became important for me, in the course of the present study, to be able to address some of Marx's ideas in the context of the shift he was responsible for in political thinking. This means that the way we can understand how he sought to answer a few Aristotelian questions implies a consideration of the different point of view he occupied. Aristotle defined an initial position for the student of the ethics. Marx sought to understand how valuable it was to be neglected by one's country or political community. I believe these positions are related, but they also show valuable contrasts.

The chapter six continues with a study of the concept of *class-consciousness* as an appropriate way of recovering some of Marx's moral teachings. I say, recovering, because I believe that Marxism has interpreted this concept in a

functional, or even, tactical way. This made the concept of *class-consciousness* the disguise for some rather dangerous eliminativistic attitudes that I do not believe to be endemic to Marxism. I argue, therefore, that a careful consideration of this concept reveals some difficult moral problems for a political community. It is valuable for moral philosophy – and hence for political philosophy – to understand how humans are capable of forming *class-consciousness* in virtue of their shared condition and outlook on life.

If not considered as just one more cog in the complex machinery of a Marxist conceptual scheme, the concept of *class-consciousness*, and the conditions in which it is formed, reveals a difficult recurring idea political communities have to address: the holding of legitimate power. But there is a peculiar moral danger in this: the opportunism that comes with the attempt to read the formation and purpose of class-consciousness as finally revealing a form of dependence upon a party or a leader has to be philosophically addressed. In this sense, the history of Marxism cannot be ignored.

I tried to read Lukács's *History and Class Conscioussness* with as much caution as I could. I know it is not fair to accuse him of the sort of revolutionary voluntarism Luxemburg accused Lenin of.[2] But his concept of *epistemological privilege* has, in the end, a function not altogether irrelevant to the legitimation of a party as a vanguard. Luxembourg had always, although not explicitly, preserved the genuine Hegelian substratum of Marxism: The formation of *class-consciousness* is connected to the notion of alienation; it emerges in a political community that exhibits the signs of deterioration. In favor of this particular idea I have sought to criticize both Lukács's idea of an *epistemological privilege* and his reading of alienation as a form of immediacy.

The *animus* of a generation is historically bound; and so was the *animus* of a particular generation of Marxist and their opponents. Very often it is rather comical to inherit a posture that is not at all concordant with the place we find ourselves in history. I believe I have kept my thinking outside pressures of this sort, pressures that, very often, strain many readings of Marxism. In my readings of Marx, there is nothing but an attempt to understand what seemed to him to be a moral salience manifest in

[2] 'Leninism or Marxism' in *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 80-82.

the most trivial actions that constitute our common lives. I was nowhere preoccupied with any allegiance to any form of orthodoxy.

In chapter seven I have sought to address what I believe is a cue for an entire *philosophy of reciprocity* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is my point of arrival.

I address topics such as the abrasive moral perfectionism that comes with the arrogance of a generation that believes its political aspiration to be the achievement of perfect history. And also, how a political community may not, in virtue of its imperfect past, survive without explicit reconciliation – any given political community ought to listen to its history as the history of the resentment and joy that often accompanies its formation.

Hegel recognized the Aristotelian necessity of clarifying the conditions under which individuals acquire virtue. But he revised this idea in a world where an initial position for both individuals and political communities was no longer available. Moral philosophy was to learn from history that to ignore that very history was bound to lead to evil – the *human function* is revised as a *human vocation*.

This means that the moral vocabulary we use to talk about virtue, and its place in human life, has to be able to accommodate such notions as forgiveness, aspiration, and moral failure. The history of morality cannot do without addressing the emergence of the virtue of charity and its place in human life, nor can political philosophy aspire to preserve a common end for a community without the notion of reconciliation.

I found in the *Nicomachean Ethics* the intuition Hegel expressed at the very end of *Faith and Knowledge* in his quote of Pascal: Philosophy either lost nature altogether or exalted it as synonymous with a *lost God*.[3] But the recovery of nature – *for us, here and now* – assumes a different path from the one Aristotle took. We do not only find ourselves unable to stomach the idea that slaves are naturally deprived of aspiring to a vocation similar to ours, we are prevented by our humility from believing that, as McIntyre pointed out, the thief at the cross could not have died unlike he lived.

Aristotle believed that nature sometimes made mistakes in attributing the body of a free man to a slave. Such was his conception of a benevolent nature. We, on the other hand, cannot but help thinking that it is only we who make such sort of

[3] *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 190.

mistakes: this is the burden of our history. I have tried to argue that this is a problem we cannot avoid, precisely, given our Aristotelianism.

The reconstruction of a coherent account of the importance of virtue in our lives can hardly have the same shape as it did for Aristotle. I have attempted throughout to make room, in what I called a moral psychology, for such notions as aspiration, failure, redemption, and forgiveness. I do not claim that such notions did not have their counterparts in the culture Aristotle belonged to. I have rather simply focused on the culture *I* belong to. Since, I am bound to think about the *ethical life* I have known so far. The problems such notions make for a coherent treatment of virtue, and for a proper understanding of what virtue is, are quite present in our recent history in the form of philosophical perplexities. I have therefore merely sought to understand why, from out of the teleology of a benevolent nature, came the need to understand the teleology of aspiration.

We are nature. Or, perhaps more accurately, we belong to nature. I feel the wind pushing against my back when I am walking somewhere, and this wind pushes me in a similar manner as it does the dust on the road. The wind does not care about the dust, or about me. The wind, the dust, and other animals are here with us. Other animals, like us, will perish in nature, while the wind will never cease. We are in nature, and yet nature never ceases to give us a sense of threat – it always remains an inexhaustible, blind, power. I am nature, but in my condition. And my condition imposes a limit upon me.

As students of the *Phenomenology,* we are bound to aspire to a position of humility and with it we are bound to learn the serenity that can bring us revelation. The *Spirit* we find in the pages of the *Phenomenology* is, in the many stages of his education, often humiliated by a powerful *way of the world* that recognizes no authority in its attempts at wisdom or virtue. Philosophy is to stay the course, and to see in the *way of the world* not its enemy but its friend – such are the demands of maturity.

It is with this ideal of empathy that I read the *Phenomenology* as providing us with the elements of our reciprocal way of living and thus with the higher end of virtue. *We ought not to be indifferent to others; we ought to worry about others*.
But our history – we ought not to ignore it – puts us in a position where it is already *too late*. There have been too many institutions, economic systems, and political

nations that have oppressed, enslaved, and taken advantage of others. For this reason we can only restore trust if we are capable of conquering resentment with forgiveness.

1. Inner and outer

Concerning a starting point

1. Put your right hand over your chest and wait until you feel the pulse of your heart! This, I believe, is the perennial gesture of philosophy – the attempt to apprehend at once the absolute, unconditioned, principle of vitality. But this gesture is fraught with uncertainty. As a form of contraction, it is fraught with the danger of reduction. I do *know* that I am not the pulse of my heart. But also, that I wish I had an answer to what I am appears to be a primitive imposition to me.

Our attempt to apprehend ourselves contracts and expands. I mean to say that we feel the pulse of our heart and so we know that we are feeling our potentiality, which is we know we are feeling our individuality and all that may pertain to it, but we also know that we are not there. We are not in the vital pulsation; the vital pulsation is *in* me – it is inside of me. And the closer I try to get to this pulsation, a sort of folding unto myself, the more distance I have to put between me and all that I depend on, that is, everything else I know is *another*. This distance I speak of is, of course, not positive. It is a distance I postulate in my thinking, a distance I cannot sustain the very minute I gaze at the world. And now, my thinking begins to expand, it begins to grab on to wherever I am, or to wherever I was born, it tries to bring into clarity all that surrounds me, all that threatens me, all that helps me, all those who gave me my name and my education, only to contract when I feel lost amongst all that is another. And now, there is also my acting: the way I bring about changes in the world, the way I become someone, the way I learn something or practice something, the way I act upon others. In one sense, it is the way I keep myself to myself even when thrown into the world. And I do not wish to say that I am my actions; I am not simply my actions. But I wish to say I become someone through my acting. And I do so amongst others, others like me.

I would like to start here, to start with our actions. And this implies that I carefully follow the contraction and expansion of our thinking.

I want to consider an expression of such a starting point as a starting point for a *philosophy of mind*. In the *Philosophical Investigations,* Wittgenstein notices the following perplexity:

> It seems paradoxical to us that we should make such a medley, mixing physical states and states of consciousness up together in a single report: 'He suffered great torments and tossed about restlessly'. It is quite usual; so why do we find it paradoxical? Because we want to say that the sentence deals with both tangibles and intangibles at once. –But does it worry you if I say: 'These three struts give the building stability'? Are three and stability tangible?[4]

The primary difficulty seems to be the ordering of "tossing about" to the "torments" that are felt – *from tangible to intangible*, Wittgenstein goes on to say.

I mention this specific order, because we encounter in this presentation of our problem the concept of a "report". It is perhaps useful here to look at Wittgenstein's analogy in detail. The analogy mentions four physical objects – three struts and a building – and what seems to be a quality: stability. The concept of stability is ordered to the three struts, which are responsible for the stability and this, nonetheless, belongs to the building. So, in fact, we have an object, which is the possessor of the quality of being stable. It possesses not only the remaining three struts, but also the operation performed by these three struts that offers stability.

We may ask: would we still deploy the concept of building if the three struts where removed? The answer is, I think, yes. We would have an *unstable building*, and the way we act towards unstable buildings is quite distinct from the way we act towards buildings we identify as stable.

This last remark is meant as an extension of Wittgenstein's analogy. In one sense, the medley that constitutes our reports of intentional actions seemed to require something intangible. To answer the question, "Are three and stability tangible?" we could reply positively, as long as we can mention the three struts. Nothing in our report ever crosses the boundary of the tangible, and yet our insistence that it does is not misguided. Not, however, until we have recovered the *intactness* of the stable building – not until we found our way to the thought that *the nature of a thing is revealed by its operation*; even if what we speak of is a building, not something that was once a building and still retains some of its characteristic form (such as the way a

[4] *Philosophical Investigations*, §420.

cadaver still retains some of the form of a living body, although it has lost all the grace of its movement, not to mention everything else it has lost).

Sometimes struts are placed on the outside of a house that is threatening to collapse, a provisional solution to maintain the house's façade. Does this unstable house now wear the organ of its stability on its outside? I mean, are the exterior struts that push against it from all sides just like the struts that once sustained it? They are not the same, of course. They are not the same, because the outside struts are a perversion of the functionality of the house, a perversion to what a house *is for*. And here we should not say: sure, these outer struts confer stability, and so did the interior ones before they deteriorated; because, a house is not a salvaged house, not *ab initio*.

If I tattooed my bone structure on the surface of my skin (like many gang members do), could I perhaps be said to be reminding myself of my interior? Or of what confers stability to my body? My actual bones are not like the cast I wear when I break my leg; they are not what I plaster on the outside of my body in order to fix something that now is amiss. But again, does the tattoo remind me of my interior? For a gang member, it is a reminder of what he will become; it is a reminder of death, and so, in a rather straightforward way, it is a reminder of the absence of an interior. And so, this is not at all the interior we are looking for because it is not bones we are looking for, nor any other part. We are looking for something that is given to us as a totality.

2. The root of this perplexity seems to reside in the possibility of utilizing "building" in the construction "unstable building." Now, the extension of the analogy could consist in describing exactly how we behave towards unstable buildings. One thing about them is that they are mostly unsuitable for anything a building is made or used for: living and working, for example. Their unsuitability can (and often does), of course, come in degrees, but the main reason we treat unstable buildings differently is precisely because they threaten to cease being a building at any time. Maybe, if we substituted 'unstable building' for 'something that was once a building' we would avoid this difficulty. But our problem is not merely a linguistic problem. The possibility of using, intelligibly, that is, intention-dependent concepts in situations similar to our 'unstable building' is quite familiar. For instance, almost all verbs that express an activity have a somnambulistic version. These verbs appear in these

special cases in a qualified form as in 'sleep-walking' and this qualification is not without importance.

Again, as in the case of the 'unstable building', our stance towards these is quite different. The problem can be seen as a difficulty in correctly appreciating what is happening. Let us consider an example where we see someone driving. The application of the active verb 'driving' is correct, even in the somnambulistic version of it. The driver can be correctly described as controlling the vehicle in a series of co-ordinate movements.[5] The peculiarity of the somnambulistic versions of active verbs lies precisely in the fact that the string of co-ordinate movements is identical to the normal cases when one does thing fully consciously. Yet, in cases of imputation of responsibility, the similarity between the strings of caused movements is discounted, and the people involved in appropriately appreciating what happened have to turn towards different considerations – a similarity in describable movements is not sufficient to establish grounds for the deployment of intention-dependent concepts. A familiar temptation emerges here: we have to find the element that, when missing, keeps us from correctly referring to normal cases of intentional action. Something has gone amiss in our descriptions; something more has to be posited in order to render the description into a full-blooded description of an intentional action. This temptation emerges quite naturally and it is not without further argument that we can even term it as a temptation.

The argument has stressed a possible characteristic oddity in our expressions when we reflect on events that involve someone else's behavior. This oddity is merely a device; it is something to be reversed (we can almost hear the warning: 'Don't think, look!' within it). Nonetheless, it generates an artificial distance that leads us to appreciate the banality of such a medley outside a philosophical argument. At this stage, our second point emerges: the (apparently) correct formal construction of somnambulistic versions of active verbs is insufficient, precisely because it is formally insufficient.

The temptation mentioned above would proceed by taking the argument about somnambulistic versions as formally sound, as a final statement for the necessity of a different course of argument. This new direction might mention a separate item that is somehow missing – perhaps, something like the three struts.

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[5] 'Acts of the will and responsibility', in *Punishment and Responsibility*, p.109.

Nevertheless, the argument that follows does not impugn the dignity of a concept that is operative in explaining the noted difference in our intuitions about normal and non-normal cases. To put it plainly, the mode of explanation has to pay attention to much more than just finding the missing link. (In spite of this, we ought not to impugn the dignity of such an argument; there is a shared motive for an argument like this, even if the premises are not shared). I do not, therefore, wish to dispute the *bona fide* attempt to make causality one such operative term. As for the notion of Self-Conscioussness – the notion I intend to further pursue – it cannot be treated as an unexplained explainer. This is to say that I will have no concerns regarding its epistemic priority, since I believe we ought rather to *look* at what we *do* – walking, building houses, going to rehearsal, aspiring or failing – in order to find out what a human mind *is*. Any intuition about our application of the concept of intentional action and the deployment of intention-dependent concepts will imply the conceivability of the idea of Self-Consciousness. Therefore, the idea of Self-Consciousness is to be explained *as required* by our banal intuitions – the very intuitions that give it content. This approach resists a starting point that posits a formally distinct object, one conceivable along the lines of the three struts, something responsible and yet formally distinct from a stable building (a building we treat as a building). Self-Conscioussness draws up a stability in our actions as, it is our capacity to provide answers to such question as: why we do what we do, how we do what we do, and our critical apprehension of what we have done; or, alternatively, now in an Aristotelian vocabulary, it defines what being an intact person is.

Anscombe famously expressed this same intuition by criticizing the notion of a "mere *extra* feature". Her argument finds fault with a particular conception from our first assumptions – the connectedness throughout time of a subjects' activity and his obligation to explain the order of that connectedness – as entering differentially as an explanation of what happens: "This (practical knowledge) can seem a mere *extra* feature of events whose description would otherwise be the same, only if we concentrate on small sections of action and slips which occur in them"[6]

The description of an intentional action *is not* the description of a somnambulistic action. The idea of an *extra feature* limits our knowledge of what *is*.

[6] *Intention*, p. 88.

Our common case becomes common by addition and our defective case becomes defective by subtraction. But the common case *is not* like the defective case at all.

The absence of a limit to our knowledge about what is happening constitutes the appeal to our initial intuitions about action. These represent the content of a species of knowledge that implies more than mere isolated episodes of reasoning, as well as acts of integration of what is otherwise mere theoretical knowledge (theory *put to the service* of practice). Strictly speaking, the process, through which the connectedness of the positively referable events emerges, grounds the answerability of the agent. In this we find *self-consciousness as a unifying principle.*

3. The imposition of a limit on our activity, in turn, pushes us toward a solution that concentrates only on "small sections." It can hardly take in all that is involved in an entire activity (e.g. becoming a bass player). But why does it only take into account small sections?

One answer is: due to its expressive economy. We have certain bits of behavior that are correlated to certain other items, perhaps intangible ones, which suit our explanation and is undeniable, that is *prima facie* undeniable (hence the elegance of a theory). To demand more than a local, expressive explanation will require defining a species of knowledge and a particular capacity that allows us to suitably gain and act based on such knowledge – *practical knowledge as practical reasoning*.

A second answer to this imposition of a limit derives from the initial plausibility that we might perceive behavior as formally sound when it is anything but. To restate the previous argument trying to make apparent the value of the normal case is perhaps more than just to insist on a bit of common sense. If there is no paradox in our reports, and if the non-normal cases are discernable, we seem to be bound to recognize the common case and to be capable of recognizing it without having to appeal to defective cases. Therefore, let us introduce a descriptive term in order to approach such common cases: in our reports of common cases we characterize a power – we apprehend a *characteristic power* at work.

This descriptive term is internal to the phenomenology that supports it. In shifting our attention to the common case, we shift our attention to the conditions of intelligibility revealed through such descriptions. Some of the concepts used in the first statement of our problem – tangible and intangible, or external and internal – are *reflexive*. A question relating to the sense of the contrast – interior/exterior – assumes,

at least problematically, the intelligibility of the pair. By introducing this descriptive term we turn our attention both to the conditions of its use (how we know), and to what it renders comprehensible (what is known). This descriptive term functions like a dragnet. When we consider cases like Wittgenstein's example above of someone who tosses wildly about, the characterization of a power will work by retaining the whole of what is given: the tossing about and *why* someone is tossing about, etc. So, the descriptive term introduced is not meant to be reductive, but to retain everything that answers to our interest, proceeding then to a piecemeal understanding of each case – this is the dragnet conception of descriptive metaphysics. There is no attempt to revise the status of our metaphysical apparatus, but rather to understand our most vital actions as a totality.

We start our investigation by (a) explaining the problematic reflexive character of the concepts employed in the characterization of a power; how the expression of our reflexive thinking *expands* and *contracts* – to the world and to the expression of our unmediated thoughts –, and how to apprehend someone doing something is, necessarily so, something that allows for reciprocity, (b) how to conceive of an individual who possesses such a knowledge, what it is to become someone through acting, e.g. to become a musician and (c) the possibility that conditions this species of knowledge: connectedness of events involving a subject's behavior throughout time and his liability to provide the explaining order of these; practical knowledge and practical reasoning.

The imposition of a limit

4. Before, I said that Anscombe's complaint mentions an otherwise absent limit. The limit seems to be part of a correlative mode of thinking that renders something, that is to be conceived in a thoroughgoing manner, as an *extra feature* of something distinct.

An argument for the artificiality of this limit may start from a hypothetical exercise of actual limiting. Wittgenstein attempted such an exercise. Let us question the virtues of such an exercise. This sort of limiting illustrates a certain kind of pressure that emerges quiet naturally in philosophical thinking. I mention this only because although Wittgenstein once asked himself: "but can't I imagine that the people around me are automata, lack consciousness, even though they behave in the

same way as usual?"[7] No answer to such a question will resolve the modal difficulty, which is the same as saying that, the importance of this question is not relative to its possibility, which Wittgenstein does attempt, and equally important that the philosophical pressure Wittgenstein's question addresses is in no way reducible to our ability to conceive of such question. And therefore, finally, an affirmative reply to Wittgenstein's question is not what we are after. If this were the case, the somnambulistic versions of verbs that express an activity would provide enough argument for the notion that what we have to render explained is something quite distinct from what we usually explain; after all, the somnambulistic versions are *actual* occurrences.

What we should ask in turn is if the explanation of this separate item, the item that makes the difference, would be the explanation of what we usually call *intentional action* at all; would determining this item be equivalent to the rendering of some intentional action *explained*? To render an intentional action explained is not necessarily to define it as such. It is rather to assume it as such, perhaps even on grounds of fallible evidence. An explanation that proceeds by positing a separate item is a mode of reification – it explains something we wanted explained, but it is not what we understand when explaining. It confers autonomy upon the explanation by extracting it from the context in which it is used, the context that supports its epistemology. If we contrast the two distinct modes of explanation, the difference emerges: 'He is causing his arms to move'/ 'He is driving'.

The latter explanation is our preferred mode, because it is our usual point of departure. Notwithstanding the fact that these modes of explanation can be conflated, it is from a statement like 'He is driving' that we usually start. This is the case even when we wish to know what the driver has to say about it, and in this starting point there is something we do know.

Therefore, let us conceive of a limit as something that removes some of what figures in our usual explanations. What it removes will have to emerge in the course of the argument, and this argument will first have to stay away from the sort of philosophical pressure we mentioned above. So far, no additional motivation can be given for this course of argument, and we cannot say yet what exactly is being

[7] *Philosophical Investigations*, §420.

limited. Instead, let us first mention some direct consequences of attempting to enforce a limit of this kind.

5. Most likely, if you try to conceive of everybody around you as an automaton "you will either find these words becoming quite meaningless; or, you will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling, or something of the sort."[8]

To limit our knowledge produces both of these effects. The sense of our descriptions dissipates and we cease to feel at home with them. This hypothetical limiting of our knowledge exerts a violence that remind us of the dignity of considering the normal case – we are quite capable of spotting the normal cases, even when we lack a proper determination of what it is we do know.

This way of thinking can be complemented by considering what is relevant for the correct determination of an object in actuality. For instance, in analogy with perception, the right determination of a given object will imply more than just its shape. Wittgenstein does give us an example involving perception, but his example is, again, expressive of a reduction: *To see people as automatons/to see the cross-piece of a window as a swastika*.

In the context of perception, the reduction is obvious enough so that we should clearly understand the one element of the example that is to be preserved. This is, namely, that the completion of the object –the cross-piece –is logically prior to its being limited and constitutes the possibility condition of its limiting (the swastika). Once again the mere possibility of limiting is present, and it has to be shown how this would affect its correct determination through perception. One viable answer, which fastens on the logical priority of the whole, is to maintain that the *real relations* of the object could not be properly thought, as long as we maintain its cropped version.

By real relations, I am referring to something like the following: when cleaning a window, you have to clean within the edges of the cross-piece; you could not treat the cross-piece as a swastika and clean right through the subtracted four window edges. This is to show that, in abstraction from the real relations that imply the intact object, *objectivity* cannot be maintained.

[8] *Philosophical Investigations*, §420.

Again, we have to reconsider the capacity to which we seem to be answerable, namely, to apply our concept of *intentional action* to normal cases. Our exposition offers us a new aspect: the idea about *real relations* provides us with a positively signifiable concept. It makes the real whole intelligible in the context of a relation. It is implied that when we clean the window, we will, indeed, treat the window as having a cross-piece at its center in the same way as it is implied that living and working in a building will imply the stability of the building – the tangibility of the stability has to be understood in the context of the real relations in which the building stands to us; this is what was lacking in our argument: the conception of a relation.

Self-Consciousness, as that which marks the difference between a normal case of intentional action and a somnambulistic version, has to be placed under the same sort of consideration. The only thing our hypothetical limiting showed was how the relations we usually assume can become ungrounded, and what was intelligible became unfamiliar. Still, the reduction to a behavioristic automaton implies its association with a notion of interiority – a reflexive concept.

After all, we can say: that *is* what marks the difference. The difference did produce unfamiliarity in us; if this automaton talks, it can talk *at* us but not with us. This is something we know, and yet our unfamiliarity is not resolved by coming to terms with what we perceive in such automatic behavior. Our question is related to the unobvious origin of the knowledge of such concepts. One way of putting this unobvious character is to call it intangible or otherwise to apply the exercise of subtraction to these concepts, which is, in a way, to isolate them from their real relations – *although only in thought*. If we do not reify this interior, we can maintain that its inteligibility is not given to us separately from anything we do know positively (even though we do have a conception of this interiority that is beyond its reduction to what is outer, supposing that the outer would be stable just anyhow). Let us call it something *comparatively internal*. And let us insist that this idea of something comparatively interior necessitates something that is recognizably positive.

This notion seems at first to be merely negative and an attempt to dilute our first intuition about something interior into something outer. But this is only the case if the conception is still reminiscent of the initial correlative way of thinking. Instead we may try to argue that the knowledge of something positively referable will not dilute our initial intuition about the distinctive element missing in somnambulistic cases. Contrariwise, it will be an attempt to elucidate the implied *amphiboly* of this

concept – the supposition that the *interior* could be constructed quite autonomously from any positive signification, since it is often felt as missing when anything otherwise *outer* is in place.

Let us give more content to the idea of something *comparatively interior*.

Not quantitative interiority – dialogue and dissection

6. Before, I mentioned our capacity to be answerable to normal cases of intentional action. In these cases, nothing beyond our positive signification has to be present and this does not have to impugn any intuition about interiority. This very intuition is represented in Anscombe's suggested method of inquiry into intentional action, or to which normal cases of intentional action is liable: asking the question 'Why?' To ask this question is already an indication of a wider conception, and certainly of a positive relation between an acting subject and somebody else. It presupposes at least that the agent's doings is liable to be questioned (although the origin of the question does not have to always spring from the same kind of doubts).

7. The questioning is a method of inquiry. It is representative of a peculiar interest two subjects might have in each other's actions. This is an interest that, according to our initial intuition, could figure into our earlier rubric of *interior.* Before saying more about the peculiarity of this method of inquiry, I want to look at an opposing method. The reason for this is to negatively work out some important aspects pertaining to the preferred method.

When going to the store, one often has the choice between grapes and *seedless* grapes. The latter ones are indistinguishable from the former. This can be a problem if no other indication, price or an *ad hoc* description, is available. Assuming one could interfere with these grapes, your preferred method to distinguish amongst them would be to look inside them – to open them up and look for seeds. Doing so would resolve your doubts, but it would also allow something else: to numerically discern the seeds. If, by chance, you applied your method to seedless grapes, you would discern zero seeds.

The method of dissecting the grapes allows for two distinct results: no seeds or seeds, and if so, how many. The point of the inquiry depends on the knowledge of the interior of the grape; the *concealed* interior is what demands the inquiry in the first

place. This type of interiority directly opposes the sense of comparative interiority we are after.

One feature of the numerical interiority of the grape is, as said, precisely that it allows for zero. It allows for a seedless grape without affecting any of the grape's real relations. The inquiring method of dissecting is an answer to this – comparative interiority does not allow for this feature because there is *no possibility of its complete absence*; its absence implies a positive difference in its real relations.

An equally important feature of comparative interiority is that it also does not allow for one to quantitatively discern anything. The question "How many thoughts did you have today?" is hardly answerable. Nevertheless, one answer related to this question is intuitively possible, since any given subject is in a position to quote some of his decisions, choices or resolutions.

Let us subsume all of these under the concept of *conclusion*, and imagine an opposing concept of *mistake*. The opposition between both of these concepts can be explained as follows: when deciding or choosing, one arrives at a conclusion – the conclusion *to do A,* for instance. This conclusion is liable for a justification, so the subject decided *to do A, because*…. Upon arriving at this conclusion, there is the possibility that the subject went through different stages in his reasoning. These stages might even have represented stopping points similar to those of a conclusion, but if the subject kept thinking, and revised what had crystallized as a conclusion, then these can hardly have been conclusions. These were mistakes, since they represented stages where the subject had not yet reached the full conclusion of his reasoning. These *mistakes* can represent similar stopping points for the subject, because they afford the formation of beliefs. (Both information and misinformation generate beliefs at least in the very banal first personal expressive sense: *I believe that*… uttered by someone who is about to be shown the opposite.) And, both conclusions and mistakes may persist as beliefs throughout time. This persistence would explain, for instance, why it is possible to have several expressions of the same thought throughout time (where each expression does not represent a different thought, nor would the persistence of it be consciously isomorphic with the stages taken to arrive at such a thought). What will complete the *because*… clause will not necessarily be a description of the various stages: you might abbreviate or paraphrase the stages, you might not quote all the *mistakes* you made, you might have forgotten some of these.

Now, given this very sketchy scheme, let us imagine the following dialogue where a subject explains his reasoning to another by quoting some of the stages of his reasoning:

S1- "I *want to do A*, so first I thought that *y* was a way, and saw later that *x* was better *because*…."

S2- "Why not *z*?"

S1- "Well, *z* is good, but *z* implies *l*!"

S2- "Not at all! You can *z* without l nowadays!"

S1- "Well, I now think that *z* is better for *A-ing*!"

This dialogue expresses the quoting of a procedure where S1 ends up *adding* one more step to arrive at his *conclusion.* (The dialogue is a *deliberative* conversation about *means*).

It is a person different from the reasoning subject that suggested this addition. Nevertheless, in order for the reasoning subject to figure in this suggestion as a conclusion, he had to recognize it as constituting a pertinent conclusion to his own reasoning. This addition could be asserted by the subject later on in a monologue that revises or recalls his reasoning.

This is the sense of adding that is pertinent to what, in our discussion, has been called interiority. This adding, although effected by a subject who is not the reasoning subject himself, bears an interior relation to the reasoning subject and this relation is not necessarily one of quantitative discrimination. Its sense allows for the notion of isolation, say, like recognizing a missing step, but it is *that* to which it *adds* that allows for its presence and status.

Before, in our exposition of quantitative interiority, we said that discernibility in number was possible in virtue of the dissecting method. But was any adding of this sort possible? A grape might grow just as many seeds as it naturally does, but nothing exterior to it may introduce another quantitative element without introducing something *alien*. To introduce another seed into it (assuming there is such a method without destroying the grape) would be the introduction of something baring no relation to the other seeds contained in the grape. The simple fact of being a seed, or a similar seed (from a similar grape), would not bare any ordered relation. It would bare no relation of opposition, nor of necessity, but only of similarity. As said before, quantitative interiority may imply *numerical variation* (e.g. grapes at different stages

of their growth have a different number of seeds), but it does not allow for *ordered variation.*

Comparative interiority then implies the *impossibility of absence* and a suggestibility for an *ordered variation*. Both these aspects are expressed in the outer relations of the thing possessing such a comparative interiority; they are *real relations*.

The contrast worked out above made use of an obvious deferring conception of interiority, but the two aspects that we have fleshed out should give some content to the notion of comparative interiority. In light of this latter notion, let us approach the notion of *expression of intention* and contrast the two distinct ideas implied by this idea.

Local expressive explanation

8. Here is an example of a model for this type of explanation: "One might as well call a car's stalling the *expression* of its being about to stop"[9]

A problem resides in the restricted locality of this expression. The expression seems to be correlated with a mechanical defect (in this case), which is manifested through the malfunctioning of the car. The potential expressiveness of intention would have to radically differ from this form of expression, since one fundamental aspect we have to account for is the ongoing presence of a form of knowledge. What is expressed is not merely an antecedent; it is not merely a *completed* antecedent that causes a symptom. A symptom is locally restricted and its flaring up is conclusive. What is expressed by intentionally acting, as an expression of intention, would have to make itself apparent non-locally – its detection would have to be *thoroughgoing* and not *sporadic*.

Here the previous argument against the conception of small sections returns. But why does this form of knowledge involve thoroughgoing expressiveness? Theoretical knowledge gained through receptivity and practical knowledge form a nexus subsumed under the idea of the attainability of an end, a nexus relevant to the control of the deed. The expressive character of sustaining an intention will imply a continuous mode of expression throughout time: Imagine someone insisting on walking up a hill. The picture might involve various slips, the reconsideration of an

[9] *Intention*, p. 5.

alternative path, the noticing of a harder patch of dirt in one particular spot. What is expressed is far from completed. The expression is not something that flares up and is detected; it is something we accompany while it develops. It develops in an orderly fashion: what was expressed in a previous attempt is *absorbed* in every following attempt as a correction – the expression is not instantaneous.

The example of the stalling car seems to give us a model that offers no room for the consideration of sustained intentions. It is merely an immediate expression of two distinct items through correlation. The relation between these two items allows for no *interval*. The mode of expression characteristic of action has to allow for an interval, since the concept of *mistake* would otherwise never be applicable to actions.

The possibility of an interval that occurs between the malfunctioning of the car's motor and the car stopping opposes the sense of interval we are interested in. Since nothing relevant regarding the stopping of the car occurs during this interval, this interval is *merely* the time the expression takes.

Everything that could happen in between, say the car starts up again because of another malfunction, is merely accidental and bears no relation of order to what is happening. The car's stalling could not be interrupted and later on resumed in the same way that a disease cannot. It can vanish and return, but it cannot be interrupted because the stalling is not the expression of something that is being brought about.

9. Before, in working out the notion of comparative interiority, we discerned a sort of interval that was of interest to us. It emerged in connection with the reasoning of a subject and a suggestion by another subject. Anscombe suggests that the expression of an intention can be contrasted with e.g. the expression of emotion. One reason she provides is that the expression of an intention allows for a certain kind of conventionality. She must not mean that these are *not* conventionally recognizable since, in a non-specified way, expressions of emotion are – crying is by all means conventionally recognized. The argument also cannot equally mean that the sense of convention she uses must imply a certain tacit agreement (it is true that no one agreed that to shed tears was an expression of crying in the same way that no one agreed that moving one's legs constituted walking). The conventional aspect of an expression of intention seems to reside in its responsiveness to normative assessment. We can start by developing this thought in a rather simple case. By contrast, one important aspect

of emotion is its putative blindness to *adding* of the sort described earlier – emotion exhibits a non-responsiveness to reasons.

If someone is expressing a given emotion (e.g. grief) through crying, she cannot, in any relevant sense, be wrong about her expression of emotion. She can be wrong about the reasons that make her cry, and some reasons not to cry may be available to her. But even the recognition of the validity of these reasons does not guarantee any impact on the expression. A person might be crying for the loss of a very precious pen, find it at some point, and still be unable to stop crying about it for a while (the mere idea of having lost it for good). Emotion can be truly blind to both reasons and facts. Like the stalling car metaphor, emotion is correlated with a state that is irresponsive to reasoning and owes its locality to the presence of such a state – expression of emotion is the expression of something complete, not of something that might yet have to be completed or is yet to be complete.

Acting from affection – a first attempt at interpreting the notion of an antecedent to an action; the dictum: a mental cause need not strictly be a mental event

10. Here we discern a class of actions that is related to the expression of emotion. In this class, the subject is *passive* and does something from affection. This affection may vary: it can include bodily states, such as hunger, or emotional ones, such as anxiety.[10]

The reason why it is useful to discuss this class of actions is that the items falling under it can legitimately pertain to the concept of intentional action (unlike the expression of emotion) – when someone does something to *stop* his hunger or exits the room in order to *stop* her anxiety. In this class of actions, an opposing movement to our *ordered adding* emerges, namely *removing*. That is, in this class of actions, the agent does something to remove a given state she finds herself in.

[10] Talcott Parsons in *Actor, Situation and Normative Pattern: An essay in the theory of social action* develops the significance of *affection* to a more complex notion, comprising aspects of any given social order. His notion of affection is not entirely unimportant for the present argument. However, in this section, my examples are closer to a more primitive notion of affection, since what I intend to address is the notion of mental causality at large. Nevertheless, I do not oppose that this category can be expanded on, and indeed has to be expanded, if the aim is to understand certain complex social practices.

In our previous discussion, the ordered *adding* emerged as the capacity to gain both practical and theoretical knowledge through the integration of reasons. In the class where the subject is *passive*, all an agent does is conducive to removing the state affecting him and no suggestibility regarding the knowledge of that state has to be present. For example, someone might suggest reasons why someone else should not be anxious, why it is silly to be so; nevertheless, this person will still have to leave the room as this is the only way to remove her anxiety. To remove the state affecting the agent restricts what can be done, quite independently of any normative consideration. But, in this class of actions, it is difficult to discern among cases. In the case of hunger, an agent may be very receptive to better ways of attaining food. Also, in the case of hunger, the action of the agent has to end with his having removed his hunger. In the case of our anxious person, there will surely be no guarantee about her exiting the room.

The sort of acting under consideration tends towards the extinguishing of the present state. It is terminal in its character, but its terminality is quite distinct. This form of terminality is controlled by the object of affection (its intensity, for example) and, also, its vital or non-vital urgency (hunger or anxiety, for example). The acting towards this extinguishing exists on the conditions of the affection. It is, in the case of hunger, bound to be recurrent, but, recurrence does not necessarily have to entail the repetition of the removing action: Contrast 'I am hungry again, I have to eat something', 'I need to smoke, I have to go outside', and 'I am hungry, I *really* have to eat something', 'I *really* need to smoke, but I can't because I have quit smoking'. The object of affection restricts what can be done; the doing is dependent on the nature of the passive imperative.

So, in this class of actions, the subject acts from a form of *passivity,* although he cannot be said to be responsible for the formation of the state of affection, but only for his response to it. This response can be conducive to gaining practical knowledge in the context of an exercise of a negative capacity, as when someone refrains from doing something *because…*, or otherwise in reasoning about the action leading to the removal of the affecting state.

The states the subject finds himself in can arise naturally, as hunger does (followed by going out for lunch), or they can be directed at an object of affection (like craving ice cream, a form of *cathexis*, and going out for ice cream), or they can be induced by something or someone as in becoming scared because of a

thunderstorm or because of the noise of a motorcycle (which is followed by the person hiding because of the noise).

11. Now, at this point, another important contrast emerges. All of these states may be provoked, but none of these is expressible in an imperatival form. Given the limited responsibility the agent has in the formation of these states.

Nevertheless, an order also restricts the possibility of forming an intention. But the contrast is quite visible, since the class of actions we looked at cannot be constructed as orders. One reason for this is that acting from passivity is not something that the agent intends to carry out. The agent may quote the affection as a *mental cause*, but not as something produced by him *practically* in order to be appropriately treated.

One difficulty arises immediately: as things stand, someone knocking on the door is just as much something not produced by an agent. But a knock on the door is like an order, not like anxiety. It is like an order in the sense that it forms a *request* for the agent to carry something out. Although a knock on the door is a material process, it is intentionally brought about. It is, like an order, *reciprocally* structured. The reciprocal structure marks one aspect of the *reflexive* implication of the concept of intentional action by setting up the possibility conditions to request or give an order.

12. Before moving on, a brief explanation regarding the material we have addressed so far. The last two sections are an attempt to answer some of the troubles introduced in *Intention* §10-11. In other words, to address the *dictum*: *that a mental cause need not be a mental event*. The suggested cause is, as said, a knock on the door, something as out there as it gets. Of course, this is but one of the many things that make us act, and that do, relevantly so, bare an intimate connection to reasoning. I wish now to take a break from this subject, but only to return to it later.

The body that holds a power: natural object, product and power

13. In a comment about the immediate difference that emerges when judging about an eye and a stone,[11] Kant introduces a normative notion that denotes an immediately intelligible restriction: an eye *ought to be suitable for* seeing. As a

[11] *Critique of the power of judgment*, 20:240.

contrast, a stone can be used for building something *or* for crushing something upon it.

The force of this normative notion lies in its immediacy. When we make a judgment about the eye, its actuality implies what it is *for* and reduces its possibilities *for* to nothing; no disjunctive possibilities are available.

There is a certain potentiality that is attached to the stone that is excluded from the eye, which is a certain advantageousness that is recognizable in its relative value. A stone can become a house or a hammer. Because it allows for such a relation, the stone circulates in the sphere of *consumption*; it becomes variably equivalent to something else it is not on its own. In a determinate quantity, stones become a house and before becoming a house, stones are bought for an equivalent sum of money. A stone contains all of this in virtue of its qualities, and yet the value of a stone will shift with the principle that is pressed upon it. In one case it becomes a house, in another case it can become a statue. Statues, however, are very different from houses in both value and use. Even if the stone circulates in an untransformed state, its possibilities *for* becoming something else are preserved. A stone might have a useful value even if untransformed; a simple stone might be for throwing.

The stone circulates without being reduced; these are some of the things a stone is for. The eye could only enter into such a set of relations by being reduced; it could only be transformed into something else, by being reduced. Of course, as a physical object, it contains this kind of possibility, but not without the implication of a reduction.

The intelligibility of the normative restriction is primarily of a reductive character. Both what we know and where we find an eye is compromised by such reduction. This becomes comprehensive if we rehearse a set of comparisons: Stones can be thrown, and so can eyes. But eyes would have first to be removed from a face. Branches brake; and so do my arms and legs, but my arms and legs would then hurt.

These contrasts are evident. They are as evident as the knowledge revealed upon their consideration. Now we know the possibility of error is not provided. Our answerability to the actuality of the eye is given, but it is given in a distinct mode, distinct from that of a stone – a mode that is limited if reduced.

14. *If reduction is a threat,* what exactly do I mean by this? In the case of the eye, reduction might mean deprivation. When we refer to the eyes of a blind man, we

refer to the eyes' power *in absentia*. The stone may gain an end, but if left alone it is hardly deprived of anything. There is a difference of sense in what we want to express. Kant is right; it is hardly on the same account that I express that a stone ought to be *for* anything at all. This sense expresses a difference in our answerability to the objects we encounter. The difference in the expressed sense is a difference in the conditions of intelligibility regarding these objects when we make judgments about them.

The common dominator – the object – is rendered uninformative, although not false. The immediacy of experience would be deprived of stability if these differentiae were not what ground that stability. By recalling these differences, we descriptively interpret our ontology. This is to say that, to recall differences is not merely a truistic form of expression. When I say *a stone is different from an eye because*..., I do not mean to express a *difference* in the sense that a door is different from a window, a frog from a dog, a pear from an apple, a pineapple from a car, red from blue…. The expression of this sense of difference is an attempt to grasp the conditions through which the object is known.

Two separate grammars

15. Following Wittgenstein, we could further delineate this difference of sense through the investigation of two separate grammars: one for the physical eye and the other for the geometric eye.

It has to be clear from the start that the physical eye is not a different type of object from the geometric eye.[12] They are not different as a stone is different from an eye, nor as a stone is different from a statue; they certainly are not categorically distinct, nor are they formally distinct. And yet, if we allow for the construction of two separate grammars, this would be due to the distinct expressive capacities of these grammars. It would be in virtue of an expressive necessity that we would proceed with this split between grammars. But since the physical eye and the geometric eye are not distinct objects, isn't the expressive purport of both grammars merely an expression of the need to avoid a form of reduction?

[12] *The Blue Book, pp.101-103.*

16. The solipsist in Wittgenstein's *Blue Book* cries *'I saw such-and-such'* and points at his eyes, and we want to make sure that his eyes are not all he is pointing at. Although it is perfectly fine that he does this, it is perfectly intelligible that he points at his eyes, we just want to be able to paraphrase what it is that he is talking about. We know he is not talking about his optic nerve, or at least not directly; we know he is talking about what he *saw*.

All we want to express is that we know that an *eye ought to be suitable for seeing*. Furthermore, we wish to say that an eye can only enter into a set of relations similar to that of a stone through a reduction. The eye *immediately* implies a mode of being known that avoids reduction in a distinct way. The description of the stone within *circulation* is an enlarged description – it is the description pertaining to the geometrical stone, not to the physical stone. The physical eye and the physical stone are its properties. The geometric eye is what it does. The geometric stone is what is done with it.

As said from the start, all we ever talk about is the stone and the eye. All the different grammars did was to give back to us the distinctiveness of a mode of knowing.

Unlike a statue, the eye is not an artifact. Its suitability *for* is a form of possession that is not an attributed functionality. This is the restrictive character that Kant discerned *immediately* in his comparison with a stone. Each and every artifact seems to be wholly unproblematic in the apprehension of its function, at least in the minimal sense of being an unnatural product, so it must *have had* a function at some point even if it is now lost to us. But we might say that, the eye contains its function *from the very beginning*.

A power as belonging to a part, a part as belonging to a whole – referring to my organs

17. The eye has, in our considerations, has been presented as disembodied. If we return it to a human body, we can further contrast it within its organic whole. Hair, for instance, seems to have a secondary cognitive function when compared with the eye. But its secondary character does not deprive it of a position within the organic whole. Again, our problem seems to rely on something more we want to say: hair grows, you see with your eyes; you lose your hair, and you might lose your eyesight.

Now, the following distinction has a further application: baldness is not a loss of a cognitive function where blindness is.

Kant's *Konkretionen* make for a defective body if they are absent, but these do not embody the exercise of a self-conscious power. This distinction might seem entirely insubstantial only if we forget the sense of ownership the solipsist was interested in or the sense of exclusivity Kant was interested in ("only of the eye do I…") – to be able to see with one's eyes makes one the possessor of something quite distinct from having hair on one's head or from having a brick to build something with.

The eye, all the same, does have its function within an organic whole, which is the same body the hair also belongs to. And this very body is intact only when it has eyes and legs, and also the power to see and to walk (the sort of intactness that grounds the solipsist's pointing at *his* eyes, which is the same sort of intactness expressed by the man who pointed at his heart to assure someone else of what he *knows*).[13] Self-reference of this sort, such as pointing at the surface of one's body, or at one's healthy organs, implies pointing at one's power to see or walk or understand *with one's* eyes and legs and heart. These acts of self-reference, reference to an organ, are backed by the *possession* of a healthy body (a living body); and *possession* means here possession without acquisition, which is to say that it is not a matter of acquired property. This grounds the applicability of a distinct sense of privation such as being deprived of one's eyesight: imagine the gesture of a blind man who points at his eye's to say he is blind.

A fence is not more at home if it is built around the stump of the tree that provided the wood for that very fence than if it were built around a lake far away from that stump. Which simply mean that: *dispersion is part of its value*.

18. The *Existenzform* of the fence implies that it ends up where it useful and needed. But not in the same way a donated kidney that ends up where it is needed and useful. The donated kidney preserves its function only if it is restituted to *a* body because if you cook the kidney, of an animal for example, you destroy it. The wood of the fence – the natural kind the implement is made out of and not the implement itself

[13] *Philosophical Investigations,* Part II, iv.

– allows for restitution; this is not *restitutio in integrum*, but perhaps we could restitute it to the forest it once belonged to in the form of detritus.

19. Imagine we come up to a fence, for instance, in a store. We are answerable to it as a product, a product of work, and as something we need. This form of reciprocity – what you need, what someone else made – might seem hieroglyphic in the way Marx put it. One would have to make an effort in order to reclaim the totality of its meaning, which Marx tells us is an effort similar to reclaiming our language.[14]

20. This comparison works if we understand what underlies it. In spite of the ontological difference between a language and a fence, these can both be figure as products; as exercises of a power. But an important dissimilarity also applies. To retrieve back a productive force, starting with a product, is to reestablish a productive relation: a relation that holds among persons. In this sense, we arrive at the exercise of a power, and at whatever it uses in order to make a product. Through the interpretation of this hieroglyph, we rescue a particular power from its anonymity. Language can, although in a different way, be anonymous. But language is usually a product only in a mediated sense, for example, in a book or letter, in writing in general or recorded speech.

To put it crudely, and perhaps in a bizarre way, the difference between a fence and a language seems to be related to how *close* you are to the exercise of a power. The notion of commodity seems to efficiently retard this closeness. You purchase so-and-so's record or book. You also can buy a fence, and it might even be a fence made by so-and-so. But to pick up just any record irrespective of the artist would be clueless or a gesture of complete indifference, and not a matter of banality.

21. Normativity in this case is closely related to the capacity that we know *seeing* as an expression of the actuality of an object (the eye). Normativity latches onto the eye in a proper sense. The insight we are looking for, nonetheless, is not with respect to an exercise as such because it is not the product of an exercise. We introduce therefore the concept of an act: not the crystallization of an exercise, but the exercising itself. It is clear that we benefit from an explanatory priority – it began

[14] *Das Kapital, p.86.*

with an act, then the product came to be – and yet we have to discern the content of this act if we are to explain the notion of an exercise.

The actuality of the eye, by implying its power, implies the notion of the *exercise* of this power. The possessor of the eye has it for seeing, but he may close his eye and refuse to use it for what it is for – the actuality of the eye implies its power and what it is suitable for, but it does not imply the uninterrupted use of this power.

When we detect this particular power, we presuppose its differentiation from *mere motion*. Mere motion may of course be interrupted. But this interruption has no internal relation to the stopping of the movement. To construct a dam is to interrupt the flow of a river, but the dam does not bring with it the *not-flowing* of the water; the water merely flows against the obstruction. When I close my eyes in order not to look at something, the closing of my eyes brings with it my *not-seeing*, in the proper sense – to refuse to see is an intentional action, a negative action.

The concept of *exercise* is an intentional-dependent notion; it is connected with the notion of a *conclusion*, insofar as the thing possessing it does not only run against obstructions, as in the case of mere movement, but has the capacity to refrain or conclude an exercise.

With the river, there is no before and after the obstruction. The river does not resume after the obstruction, nor does it remove it. There is the chance that it may destroy it; but the river's power is pressure, not an act. The obstruction occupies the same environment as the river. The river, nonetheless, does not regard the obstruction as such; the obstruction perishes under an inexhaustible source of power. An act of the sort we are after, an intentional action, does not spring from an inexhaustible power. An intentional action is a power exercised in an act that takes an obstruction to be an obstruction, if it encounters one. It treats an obstruction through a form of reasoning, which is acting.

The nature of a thing is revealed by its operation[15]. We are following this lesson.

[15] *Summa Theologiae*, Question 76, Article 1, p (22).

The reflexive distance: Requesting, being ordered, refusing, inability and one's body

22. Let us return to the notion of a request or an order. A request is a reflexive notion: it implies restrictions that are peculiar to it, and we might deem these restrictions to be *reciprocal*. Although the argument still has to address this notion in a more explicit way, our ability to foreshadow in this direction already speaks to our sense of reflexive *contraction* – this is the case where we recognize the reflexive as a resource for our ability to intelligibly express ourselves to others in a trivial, but relevant sense.

These restrictions become intelligible when we recognize an individual who possesses a power or ability to which these restrictions have application. In this sense, a request involves more than the possible fulfillment of the task requested; it also assumes a possibility of refusal or incapability to fulfill the task.

The knowledge of these possibilities is tied to what I characterize as the *primitive viewpoint*. On the surface, a request seems too common to justify the introduction of such a concept to the present discussion. Nevertheless, when we are confronted with the refusal of a given order or request, we know what is going on. The intelligibility of the refusal falls short of what we know when we make a request. One knows *from oneself* that having an intention cannot be completely diluted into an order or request even if one might intend to execute a request – in sum, what I will call *reflexive distance*. This viewpoint is, as said, primitive, as is this sort of distance (although one might have to be reminded of it). And remembering this distance entails the recovery of the position from which certain phenomena cannot fail to be intelligible to us. So knowing from oneself implies knowing what one is – hence *self-consciousness*.

23. The inability I have mentioned is dependent on the actuality of the individual agent realized *in action*, while refusal does not strictly necessitate any positive action for its content. But refusal is not outside the scope of practical knowledge. Refusal does depend on an attitude taken by the agent towards the effects of the requested action and towards himself as the author of such effects; to refuse is a negative action.

In contrast, an automaton is hardly able to do anything at all; it is merely able to do what it was made for. And therefore it does not refuse, nor is it ordered to do

something – its *Existezform* is pure execution. When it becomes obsolete, it is turned off, and its carcass is the historical reminder that something has progressed – the automaton does not cease to exist, it merely ceases to be useful. Its death, in this figurative sense, is brought about by a technological leap. This leap may render its mechanism useless, but perhaps not its function; the stability of the principle it embodied might be transposed to another machine with more gain. The technological leap is a quantitative and qualitative leap in relation to efficiency; the cadaver of the obsolete machine exists separately from its products, that is, they are not necessarily exclusive to it. The emergence of a better version makes it useless to bring the older version back to life; therefore, it is deprived of a return to a *status quo ante* not in virtue of a lack of possibility, but out of a lack of usefulness.[16]

In one important sense, the machine or the automaton, as a *body* that holds a causal power, lacks uniqueness. It does not lack formal uniqueness, say as having a style, or even a time-specific mechanical constitution. But the principle it *embodies* stands in no exclusive, let alone unique, relation to that very body. I do not mean to assert – as Strawson, I believe, correctly denied[17] – that uniqueness of a body is sufficient in accounting for the fact that I have experiences, intentions, and the like. Later I shall try to approach the insufficiency of such minimal conditions, or, coextensively, I shall approach a viable sense of *my* as it figures in *my intention* and even in *my body*. But I do wish to maintain that the notion of uniqueness of *my body* can be given an important sense. This would be the sense that pertains to a stable notion of our experiences as being embodied, that as said, does not have to impugn the dignity of our expressions using the possessive (I mean, that our self-referring expressions using the possessive are not merely gateways to philosophical misconceptions).

Unlike the machine, I do not merely *harbor* a principle of action or thought in my body (a fact the Wittgensteinian solipsist often exaggerates and the very reason why the solipsist keeps returning as an interlocutor). Of course, two different sewing machines sew almost alike, and two different tailors sew almost alike. But one of our tailors could be the protagonist of an advance in style, and the machine could easily reproduce this advance. Still, this is not all, nor even what I find more relevant. If on the one hand, I wish to provide enough argument for why *my intention* is a sensible

[16] *Das Kapital,* p. 204.
[17] *Individuals*, p.98-100.

expression, on the other hand, the expression: *I am this thing right here* is far from irrelevant. In a moment, we shall further appeal to this idea, but for now let us advance to what I believe is crucial for the sense of uniqueness I am putting forward. What is important is not merely the logical question concerning what it is to be a discernable particular, where one's body constitutes a principle of individualization (although we often appeal to such a logical differentiation). Instead, and if I am permitted to put a practical spin on this idea, it is more importantly related to the types of concerns we are bound to express with relation to our bodies (for example, in the presentation of certain facts of medical concern or even our diets). This is one important expressive aspect of the reflexive and, therefore, an integral part of its sense. In part, the advantage of machines lies in the fact that their *inability* may often be removed if a better *body* shows up; the term "better" in use here may mean simply faster, or more efficient. And, certainly, eliminating these machines in favor of the preservation of the principle they harbor, now in a new guise, carries no moral salience.

Perhaps *uniqueness* is too strong of a term for the purpose of my argument; perhaps we can simply retain this form of *being bound to* one's body as part of the *sense* of the reflexive such as in the case of expressions like *my arms are long*, *my eyes hurt*, and so on. This is but the recovery of a familiarity with our body and this sort of recovery presents interesting aspects. For example, Wittgenstein once tried to eliminate his body in thought in an attempt that, at first, promised a *purer* grasp of the sense of experience.[18] Of course Wittgenstein ended up trying to recover some of his *old* sense of experience not long after his thought experiment had begun, namely the *unnoticed* nexus between experience and movement. He tried to glue his eyes to a window – being it the case that the eyes do need some sort of body, and a window is, not entirely, but somewhat similar to the glasses we wear. A window is transparent, good for seeing through, and offers some measure of protection now that the eyelids are gone and eyes are still fragile things. From this, he went on to affix his eye to a tree branch, which offered some amount of movement and elasticity; the branches allow my eyes to move closer to something, I suppose, to focus on something, and also to distance themselves for perspective. Inevitably the whimsies of wind and other weather will be difficult to tame and this will have an effect on the branch. Notice:

[18] *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, §71-74.

When Wittgenstein and we, the readers following him, find ourselves recovering our sense of familiarity with our body and form of movement, we appeal to a quite general sense of experience. For example, we never, not even for a second, thought about protesting the fact that because I wear glasses all of my visual experiences are accompanied by the presence of a peripheral, somewhat blurry, edge. Such is the economy of elimination, and it is bound to entail recovery; Wittgenstein is interested here in a general sense of *loss,* for example: how do I *turn around* to see if something is behind me, now that my eyes are glued to a window? – Now we see that being able to turn around is something that pertains to the totality of *seeing*! But, still, it is the case that we are talking about *seeing* in a quite general way, and thus we are purposely leaving out some facts about my eyes. That *my eyes* may suffer under *myopia* is out of the picture here, even if we have already seen that the condition of *myopia* is entailed by the full-blooded sense of reflexive expressions as reference to one's organs.

When Wittgenstein says something like "Der Gesichtsraum hat wesentlich keinen Besitzer" [The space of vision has essentially no owner][19] his expression is but an appeal to our acknowledgment of the stability of our experience.[20] This means he is relying on the fact that we are capable of thinking beyond the blatant falsity of his sentence. The economy of reduction I spoke of before incurs the obvious cost of instability – after all, we do find ourselves attempting to recover the old totality from which we started. Wittgenstein is relying on our ability to qualitatively discern (which is to say, to discern in a relevant way) between subtracting my nose, or the edge of my glasses, from the stable sense of an act of experience without thereby losing the obvious relevance of something like *turning around in order to look at something*. Although we do have to look further at this idea of an act of experience, we can provisionally maintain the following idea: while a philosophy of experience without the presence of my nose or my glasses is sound, a philosophy of experience that does not take into account the possibility of my body's ability to move would be ludicrous. Looking for other bodies or guises presents itself to thought every time we proceed with a version of a self-dissecting method. The machine as a guise for a principle of action presents a sort of complete freedom from constraint, constraint *as* exhaustion, for example; the body of the machine could be *re*constructed so as to evermore

[19] *Philosophische Bemerkungen, §71.*
[20] *Philosophische Bemerkungen, §47.*

further the principle it harbors. And so the machine is truly a guise, as Marx puts it in the *Capital*, a guise free from the *organic limit* we see has applicability to *us*. This guise shifts, but only to bypass the sense of privation and of an inability we express *possessively* (we understand this in cases of medical consideration, or in our general concern for ourselves and for others else or something).[21]

We do *know* what it is to be unable to do something. We understand inability because we are not able to do just anything, and by this I mean anything possible and even worth doing. Equally, a proposed act is something easily conceivable, if we can conceive of someone reasonable at all; one could hardly exist merely as an executor of requested acts, and if forced to do so, even within a personal limit, unlike the automaton, one would posses some conception of this obligation. There is a discernable *distance* here. Unlike the machine, one does not exist solely in a functional way – we act; we do not merely exist as the possibility of a given act. We are the principle of our acts, not an act in principle.

The recognition of a Power and the recognition of an Act – one's act and one's power

24. The reflexive conception of an act amounts to knowing an act on grounds that are not merely demonstrative, which is to say in the first person. This is a minimal condition. But let us provide it with more context: Reflexivity is the possession of what grounds the intelligibility of an act *of another* that is given to me demonstratively, an act that is an instance of the *same* power as that which is known in the first person, as in the following case: *'I am looking at you looking at me.'*

In the proposition above, the person uttering *I* is the subject of his act and the object of an act of another person. We can also conceive of both acts as being similar in kind, in spite of these having different transitive objects and different subjects. The proposition, as an utterance of its subject, condenses the knowledge of oneself as the object of someone else's act. This is done through my act; it is an active realization that there is someone for me to recognize, while there is someone who recognizes me.

This understanding of oneself as an object of someone else's act has to be properly differentiated from a kind of objectifying self-reference, such as when Wittgenstein imagined someone referring to their limbs in a pile of limbs; this is a

[21] *Das Kapital*, vol.I, p.357.

form of identification that springs from a concern with respect to my body, and here, in the particular context, we encounter the sort of violence that may befall it. When we refer to our limb in a pile, we think in terms of a special sense of *lost* ownership, a sense we have already considered, of *privation* – with the privation of a body part, and the loss of the potential power that body part has, we are forced to recognize the violence that can befall the intactness of the body. To think of a limb as a separate object is, in the first place, merely a circumstantial accident; an interference that comes with this sort of assumed ownership. We may presume that it is exactly this idea that underlines this particular notion of identification: our limb is given to us through perception – and so are other people's limbs –, but these are not given to me *as my* limbs – to recognize ourselves as an object of recognition is different from recognizing ourselves as an object, or our mutilated organ as an object. The latter might be the case if we recognize ourselves as prey for another animal. Yet to know that we are an object of recognition issues in quite different expectations than to know that we are an object. In the eyes of the beast, I become strangely close to being an object precisely because I expect to be treated as one. But I know that I am an object, and for this reason I do not expect to fit into any space I can conceive of (under a door for example). But in knowing that I am an object of recognition, I may expect to be listened to, I expect that my sentences will be meaningful, and I expect that I will not become wholly useless to the point of complete indifference.

25. Presumably, Wittgenstein's solipsist felt the need to point at his eye in order to make even more clear his assurance that *he* saw something; and his eye was not in a pile, it was not a dead eye.[22] The concept of ownership is applicable here, but only in the context of an explanation of an act of seeing. The solipsist points at his eye; nonetheless, he is not merely pointing at his physical eye. He points at that with which he saw: the topic is, after all, his *assurance*. We may suppose that the mere presence of another eye, not his, would be sufficient for the solipsist to arrive at the idea of equivalence. In other words, if he has any intact notion of an organ, or any, no matter how shaky, knowledge of human biology, the notion of equivalence can be expected to come to him intuitively. After all, he did not exactly point *only* at his physical eye, but also at *whatever* he saw. For this reason, what he pointed at should

[22] *The Blue Book*, p.101.

also be present *for* another eye, if that eye is open and directed at anything at all. (However, if he really stands by his solipsistic convictions, he could argue that he does not yet have enough margin to understand it as the eye *of another*; perhaps he could insist on this, even if *we* see that it introduces instability in his knowledge of eyes, and the world he looks at, let alone the entire purpose of his assurance.) But there is an important truth to the solipsist's assurance: even if he admits that he recognizes some sort of equivalence, he would be admitting to the equivalence of a power, and not to the equivalence of an act.

If the proposition above is available to the solipsist and it is true that *he* is *looking at me, while I am looking at him*, the very intelligibility of what he is uttering depends on his knowledge of an equivalent power in a rather robust sense. All the same, and this is crucial, his sense of ownership, that only *he* is the owner of his act, persists; after all, it is true that: '*I am looking at you looking at me'*, while *'You are looking at me looking at you'*. His act has me as an object, mine does not. When he utters '*I am looking at you looking at me'* his act is reflected *back at him*. It is reflected as springing from the same power, but not as an equivalent act. And this, finally, should demotivate some of his insistence on his sense of epistemic uniqueness, or privilege. But maybe the solipsist will further refuse to grasp the sense of his act as dependent on the proper conception of a shared power – he will simply deny the fact that there is no possibility in which we can construct an epistemology that is solely exclusive to his acts.

We cannot help but to notice that the solipsist's attempt at explaining himself to us was already an excess of confidence on his part. But is the solipsist really as unrecognizable as that? Perhaps if we conceive him to be someone trapped in a hyperbole, he becomes strangely familiar. His sense of ownership over his own experience seems merely to have overstepped the boundary of reasonableness – maybe he feels somewhat threatened. After all, we do know that there are things that threaten to dissolve what he knows if he reflects upon them. And now the question becomes: is this a justified dissolution? The solipsist claims to know certain things, but error lurks every time there is the possibility of knowledge. Our knowledge tends towards the truth, but it does not resist error. What he *saw* may actually have such an overwhelming importance to him, considering the fact that it was *he* who saw it – this much is clear to us. Perhaps he realized that we do vitally rely on our attentiveness? But, of course, the point all long has been that the solipsist cannot preserve the

importance of his act, nor any stable conception of his attentiveness, not even to himself, and certainly not to us, without a general notion of the fallibility of a *shared power*. He can never make any claims with the seriousness he wishes to have.

26. Our solipsist is not interested in the sense of *uniqueness* of body we first started out with, as his pointing at his eyes might have been nothing more than incidental like something he did out of habit. He *is*, nevertheless, very interested in the *uniqueness* of his experiences and acts. By making my act the object of his experience, I hoped to steer the discussion in the direction of Strawson's *dictum* that *one can ascribe states of consciousness to oneself only if one can ascribe them to others*.[23] This kind of reciprocal thought has still to be further addressed, and perhaps it will be more instructive to drop the solipsist from the discussion. But the solipsist was very important, because he is proud of the reflexive distance we have been speaking about; the preservation of this distance matters greatly to him, as it does to us, with the important difference that we believe (less proudly so) in its communicability to others. What I have been more interested in is not the conditions under which the solipsist could preserve his position, but rather, and believing as I do that this is not grantable, what it is that the solipsist does to others when he does not recognize them. I hoped to make myself, in a sense, *closer* to the solipsist by forcing him to address my act of looking at him, and yet this does not sufficiently express what I mean. He may still not grant me that privilege, of course. If he does not address my act of looking at him, then he is not merely a solipsist anymore but just an egotist.

Reflexive distance is part of the sense of the expressions we are considering; we denote this with our use of different pronouns. But this question goes beyond the mere grammatical facts: it is the case that, if this reflexive distance collapsed, both he and I would be, amongst other things, trapped in a form of projection – supposing that at least that could be granted; we would have no operative conception of each other as the subjects of our experiences and acts. For example, I could not possibly ask anyone: "Why are you smiling?" The smile would have to be evidence enough, or not at all. I could project something onto the smile, but this projection could not even amount to empathy; there would be no question as to the correctness or the reason

[23] *Individuals*, pp.100-101.

why someone says anything. There would be no question as to why someone smiles, and so no questions about understanding another person; and, therefore, finally, even projection would be rendered utterly pointless.

I may demand that someone pay attention to me, that that person must direct his attention to me: "Look at me!", and if am granted the privilege, what I now have to say to him might entirely depend on *his* looking at me, e.g. on his attentiveness to my seriousness. In this sense, when I direct his attention to me or even to my looking, this is quite distinct from directing his attention to some feature of the world (not just in the sense that the object I direct his attention to might be very different from me, inanimate or otherwise). Contrariwise, his attentiveness to me is an exigency upon *him* and a case in point of our reflexive distance. When we look at the same thing, our attentiveness collides in an object, or aspect, or event, etc., while our attentiveness to each other is precisely the preservation of *this* difference with respect to the object – him and I – and this must be necessarily so, if we are not simply to be indifferent to each other, or even worse, eliminate each other.

27. To recognize oneself as recognized by another is not reducible to an attribution of status. This is to say that to know what it is to be recognized exploits the capacity to know what recognition *is*, in the sense that it is like *my* recognizing (but this does not necessarily imply the knowledge that this recognition is the recognition of oneself *as* the underdog, for example). Undermining recognition is also recognition. But attributions of status depend on this more fundamental capacity. The importance of such an attribution lies precisely in a *non-eliminativist* conception of the truth of the attribution. Without this, the attribution is powerless and perhaps merely an insult. Since an insult may work even if there is no truth to it, that is, its performative aspect need not be, but may well be, independent from any truth about the offended person.

Before we get to this point, let us conclude the previous thought: reflection implies the capacity of being answerable in a certain way to a certain type of object, namely things like ourselves. This takes on the assumption of the differential capacity to correctly distinguish among objects, never mind the assumption of the primitive character of the concept of person. Perhaps further describing some of the differentiae is a way of knowing this answerability. Answerability is not something we have explicitly before our mind when dealing with objects; it is something, as we

mentioned earlier, unavoidable. It nevertheless presents itself to thought when, from our necessary viewpoint, we feel some sort uneasiness.

A commitment to the truth of attributions of intention, for example, presumes the responsibility an agent has for his own actions. The possibility of uneasiness is one problematic point attached to the epistemology that results from the characterization of this power. Our starting point was precisely the actuality of this problematic. For example, *inability* is something irreconcilable if the characterization of a power assumes only a *generic form* in the sense that it is not elastic enough to adopt the concept of an individual person.

An agent is not a pure act, nor is he a mechanical potentiality; he does act, and the possibility of a reflexive distance pertains to his power to act in the same way that it pertains to our apprehension of his act. An agent has something to claim for his act if his act is one of his acts, that is, if his act is intentional. And to criticize an agent is precisely to hold him accountable for what he did or failed to do, for the explanation or lack of explanation he has for his action or lack of action. To criticize him for retreating into the role of a mere patient is, sometimes, to notice his failure to claim any pervasive effect of his own doing and to hold him responsible for his chosen lethargy – the possibility of a critical standpoint towards persons and their actions depends on the non-elimination of the agent's responsibility.

28. But we find some uneasiness in this thought. One expression of this is found in the mistakes one is bound to make due to the unreflected application of this knowledge to artworks, which is something that results from our default position. As it is quite different from a piece of fruit, an artwork does not tell you right away what it is for; As it is less then a person, you obviously cannot ask it anything. The recognition of the actuality of the artwork is the recognition that it does not have to tell you anything, in the sense you may have expected; it may never tell you anything at all.[24] This already constitutes something like prevention against an eliminative

[24] I take this idea from Heidegger. His interest is to prevent blindness to the recognition of the actuality of the artwork, which is to say to prevent the elimination contained in blindly asking something from our point of view. He cannot maintain his proposal, where we should ask from the objects' point of view, if this implies the suggestion to eliminate our point of view. We cannot attempt to occupy anything's point of view by eliminating ourselves. Therefore, this attempt may fail, and the artwork may not tell us anything at all, ever. *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks,* p.70.

move – a move that suggests itself when under the pressure to make an attribution of meaning to an object in question. But this is a peculiarity of an artistic object. It occupies something of midway; it exerts a peculiar sort of pressure. This pressure is nothing but the contrast between the un-eliminable character of the reflexive knowledge that grounds our relation to the artwork, which is put in check by our confrontation with something inanimate. In the case of a reciprocal relation, our reflexivity finds an object directly answerable to it – attributions of intention depend for their correctness on the advertence against the eliminative move and this advertence is grounded on the reflexive knowledge of oneself as an acting subject.

Reciprocity

29. Imagine two people standing in front of each other, and one of them utters the following sentences: *"My left is your right;" "Your right is my left;" "My background is in front of you;" "Your background is in front of me;" "Up is our up" and "Down is our down."*

All of these propositions display reflexive knowledge of oneself in a reciprocal *act of recognition* of someone else. These also exploit the capacity to establish an equivalence relation between the positioning of the bodies relative to how these bodies stand in space. But the equivalence relation can only be established if there is a robust conception of the experience of the other. It is robust in the sense where we possess the knowledge that the other is capable of possessing a notion such as *his right*, which is meaningful for his acting – this is the type of possession that makes a difference in any thoughts about actions, such as *his* actions.

If you look at a room full of both people and objects, you are always able to refer to the objects in the room as standing to the left or the right of each person. You are able to assume their point of view, precisely because you recognize them as not merely belonging to the aggregate of objects in space. The space stands still and if the person you are observing moves about in that room, these objects assume different reference possibilities relative to the position of this person (and now I am not simply saying "body" any longer), e.g. *that thing over there to your left*. His movements in the room contain the possibilities of that very room, e.g. the possibility of moving passed something, or behind something, or in between something, etc. This is a case in point where our reflexive notions *expand* reciprocally. The *owner* of what Wittgenstein termed a *Gesichtsraum* becomes immediately understandable to us, even if we do not own *his Gesichtsraum*; – but still, we are *all* the owners of *a Gesichtsraum* and in spite of some discountable differences (my myopia for example) all our *Gesichtsräume* contain room for *that* in the same way; otherwise, what would the purpose of being the owner of a *Gesichtsraum* even serve for? When we use

expressions like *'over there, to your left,'* we do not pause over any peculiarities; we do not reflect on the fact that *it is* someone's *left*. But, of course, the *actuality* of the thought we purport to express would be useless if this wasn't in fact someone's left (and I mean this in the sense that the warning: "you have a bug on *your* shoulder!" would be useless if we did not have a material conception of "your shoulder" for someone in particular; in the absence of this conception, there would be no reason for someone to jump up and say, "Whose shoulder!? Mine?")

The *reflexive distance* that is demanded by the employment of these thoughts, or by the fact that they are stable, latches on to the material conception someone has of the possessive *my*, that is, of himself. What the reciprocal thought *"my left is your right"* goes to show, apart from our vital sharing of orientation, is that the reality of *"your left"* is rather unproblematic to me. And by problematic I mean that I never even think of liberalizing your use of *my* in this particular case, such as to make an argument that it can only mean something public, not private. (For example, would I be tempted to liberalize your sense of *'my shoulder'*? I doubt it, and not simply because I *also* have a shoulder and a left. To put it in another way, I trust that you will understand what I mean when I say "*my thoughts about sonatas*" even when I have never had any thoughts about sonatas in the first place – although this implies a different question altogether.)

What we are after is a primitive question. If you do not have a left, you do not have a world; and now I am not even sure if you can *have* a body, in the Aristotelian sense of *intactness*, which is a human body that is fit for movement (although you might be some sort of body, for example, a plant in a vase). It seems that *yours and mine* can be quite unproblematic. After all, my left will always be *my* left, although occasionally it can be *yours* too. And, in this sense, we never have joint custody of *our* left. I mean, even when it is *our* left, *my* left is still in many useful ways exclusively *mine* with respect to both of us.

30. Imagine we could control a person like an automaton. We would have to guide him in the exact same way through a room, the way we previously described, like passed certain things and behind others. Say we want to get him somewhere in that room successfully, we would have to assume his point of view and steer him away from other stuff. In doing so, we would be relying on the nexus represented by an action and its effecting. This is a conception that his power to act, now at our

service, contains the room as a condition of its effects. We would make him *do what happens*, and there is no frictionless way for achieving this, not for him, nor me. This frictionless impossibility never figures into our plan; we never entertain it as a viable possibility – we never entertain it at all. We know he lacks those possibilities and this guiding conception is something we perceive in his action across the room; we perceive the possibilities of *his* movement *over there*.

Yet the way we perceive the possibilities of his movement *over there* are transposable onto us *over here* and this includes the sense of the propositions discussed above. But our interpretation of this thought would be very incomplete if we missed the use of the personal pronouns. The reflexive thinking, which backs up the transposition we have talked about from us to him, generates a generic conception of our shared power. By generic I mean the following: we have, in the guiding conception we are resorting to, long forgotten what he, perhaps in the possessive, would refer to as his exhaustion; imagine we have been pushing him around for quite some time now. Our guiding conception is operative in making him act, but it says nothing about his *rest*. Is it simply that we do not feel what he feels? That we do not feel the pressure of the room on his heels and legs when we are subjecting him to our ceaseless pacing around? It is true that we do not *have* his sensations. But the question I wish to address now is precisely that we do not need to have his sensations in order to understand his exhaustion, nor do we need the quality of his sensations in order to give some content to the notion of exhaustion. We could appeal to a general fact of human empathy, if we wanted to make some sense of his exhaustion, but I do not even mean this. I want to approach the very sense of sensation involved in our actions, the sense we already know from ourselves. We have to consider what is relevant to an interpretation of the appropriate connection between intention, action, person, and actuality. So let me begin by suggesting an interpretation for the following Hegelian thought: "For the cognition of nature, without the veins injected into nature by self-consciousness, there remains nothing but sensation."[25]

Our guiding conception dispensed with reduction to sensations without dispensing the effectiveness of an action. But our argument does not purport to show that sensation can be altogether absent, or that the guiding conception of a stable action can dispense with sensation altogether. There are many cases where sensation

[25] *Faith and Knowledge,* p.77.

seems to make an important contribution, even if only through a sort of absence – that odd *thing* when you miss a step, and also through extreme concentration on a task that offers some resistance such as opening a jar with a stuck lid. There is a substantial passive contribution here to our cognition of an inchoate action: remember a time when you *stopped* trying to open a jar because you wrist hurt and now compare this to stopping when you are lost like when you stop on a road to read the directions (what I mean here is the direction of your gaze, and perhaps this is too simplistic but, in one case your gaze was at what is *out there* while in the other case you gaze was at what is here *close to me;* nevertheless, both may bring you to a halt).

A reduction to sensation would miss what is known in acting. This is what I intend to argue for now. But I do not wish to make the power to act effectively *homeless,* nor even to eliminate the proximal sense that stops me from opening a jar. I wish to state the fact that I do not *get clues*, as Anscombe puts it, about what I am doing from particular sensations; I confess that I am hardly able to describe sensations in a nexus capable of yielding identity *as* actions, not mention the fact that sometimes I am wrong about *how* it feels (like if my knee feels bent, but it really is not).[26] But from the fact that reduction to sensation does not confer full identity to actions, or even postures, it does not follow that these should be eliminated. Perhaps I can make the point in this way: say we lead the robot-man up a staircase; he is carrying some heavy suitcases for a few minutes, and at this moment we grant him an *intermittent* Self-Consciousness. Would it be inconceivable to us that the weight of the luggage, and perhaps even his own weight, would be somewhat punishing after a while? We could retain the sense of a *generic power* I spoke of, and all the facts about orientation we employ in guiding him. But can we override the *realitas objectiva* of his weight because, as we have said, he has no conception of it? I mean, even if at times, as said, he has no conception of it? But since both his, and our, Self-Consciousness is not intermittent, but rather significantly absent, when it is, would we not be making our guiding conception into an *ens rationis*? Surely if any *material* conception of both actions and persons is to have any stability at all, it must rely on the simple fact that I can utter "I am this thing right here." And this is so not merely because I may in fact say this out loud (something I would never really say and thus this is a liberty of

[26] 'On sensation of position' *in Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind,* p.71.

philosophical discourse), but rather because I *am* that very thing with its weight and so is he. Therefore I now wish to finally abandon this idea of a robot-man.

Let us, once more, address the idea we are examining more explicitly: if, on the one hand, it became quite clear that the reason why our *guiding conception* could have any purpose at all was exploited in the fact that there is no point to the expression *my world* (although, I do not deny there is one, in certain contexts), on the other hand, what became threatening as a form of elimination was that *there is* a point to the expression *my legs* in the context of an explanation of action. This not only eliminates the individual (or automaton) as a subject, in a full-blooded sense we have yet to explain, it also makes the concept of action unstable if not completely void.

But now we are at crucial point of the present argument. I wish to preserve the sense of sensation we have arrived at; I wish to preserve this primitive fact. But I do not wish to reduce *an individual* (or the automaton, or any one of us) to this primitive fact; I do not wish to reduce his actions to his sensations. We understand this in the sense that I do not reduce myself to my sensations, and neither do you. Take for example my breathing. We may safely assume that my breathing is an all-important biological fact about me – a condition of possibility for my life. But I can easily remind myself that my conscious life entails, but is not exhausted by, my breathing. Facts about my breathing (that I have asthma, for example) come before me as things that condition everything else I will go on to do, or not do. This idea already has considerable scope, which is the idea that the pathology that befalls my breathing impedes me. And behind all this lies a philosophical temptation – again, to reduce myself to a vital sign, which would, perhaps, finally give me the beginning of an explanation about what I am even though it would probably miss who I am.

The proximal and the directional interpretation of sensation

31. Hegel's image of Self-Conscioussness, which has its veins in nature, intends to tell us more than we have been able to understand so far.

The *over there* deployed in our guiding conception cannot be interpreted merely in a proximal way; it is not merely knowledge of something that is somewhat removed from oneself – in any event, it is only in a special sense that I say my sensations are proximate or close to me. This is precisely what is striking about Hegel's image: although we might make sense of a proximal interpretation of the image, this interpretation would miss out on something we further wish to express.

Provisionally, we might say that there is more than the feeling of a sensation to it. When we consider Self-consciousness as *having its veins in nature,* we could say that this is as *close* as it ever gets. Is not going *over there* something that requires my sensations, although not in the same full-blown passive sense that is involved in e.g. being tickled by a feather? The thought experiment with the robot-man purported to avoid a reduction to sensation, but also to make apparent the shared sense of a space as condition of possible movements (something captured by any description in the common idiom of actions along the lines of "He is going into the kitchen").

Hegel is trying to capture a principle of cognition rather than a mere condition of cognition. But how does this imply a distinction between mere sensation and self-consciousness as having *its veins in nature*? The principle in question would have to exhibit some form of substantiality that the passive aspect of a sensation lacks. We can provide enough argument to maintain this difference because there are two conceivable relations to explain the heterogeneity between self-consciousness and nature. As a condition of consciousness, we delimit a sense in which nature impresses itself upon self-consciousness (perhaps in an unavoidable sense). But the sense of the principle in question is quite distinct. Consider, for instance, how we commonly maintain that what we are doing can be described as: going somewhere. This is to say we are moving towards someplace that we are not currently in; in contrast, imagine leading a completely motionless life, like a plant in a vase, where *we* do not move *ourselves* anywhere. We require no more than our *common idiom* to express this idea. We do move about; we do intend to go to places in order to do things. The idiom we use to express these ideas is, to take an expression from Hart, our *ordinary terminology of actions*.[27] So in our thinking about sensations, we discern the notion of proximity. But, nevertheless, are your sensations with respect to moving your legs any *closer* to you than your thoughts about going to the airport?

32. The proximal interpretation of Hegel's image could be potentially vindicated if we were to model it after pain, as something that possesses (and relevantly so) locality and intensity. But this qualitative knowledge is quite strange if we are talking in our ordinary idiom. If you have a bruise on your knee, you might bring it to your doctor's attention by pointing to the surface of your body. You may

[27] 'Acts of Will and Responsibility' in *Punishment and Responsibility,* p.102.

even poke it, as a means to discern the quality of the bruising, and say: "It really hurts, I really hurt my knee." It is exactly this sort of case that justifies the proximal interpretation of sensation; coextensively, it is also this kind of case that renders the interpretation of sensation extraneous to an explanation of intentional action. This phenomenon requires a *folding onto itself*; the explanation or verification of the sensation addresses it qualitatively and therefore lacks the required scope.

33. Instead, imagine you say, like the individuals in the *Investigations*: "I feel something hard and rough *over there.*"[28] We might start by conceiving of this sentence in the sense of an extension. This is precisely the perspective Wittgenstein starts with, and is indeed very similar to Hegel's image: "It is as if I had nerve-endings in the tip of the stick?" A reply to this question demands a sense for this phrase. The image of an extension is helpful, but not enough. This is so because the idea of an extension still exploits the proximal interpretation: it is an extended version of the proximal interpretation – perhaps a subsidiary image would be that of a tree with its many roots and branches, ever expanding, but, of course, never leaving its place.

The individual in the *Investigations* uses a stick. And the question is about the direction of his *feeling*: does he feel it *over there* or against the tips of his thumb, middle finger, and index finger…"[29]? The matter of direction is not an all-together dissolution of the disjunction; it is not a choice we have to make. The directional interpretation is rather selective, in the sense that it absorbs proximal facts *if* they are relevant; notice that the enumeration of the parts of one's hand might, even if ever present to self-consciousness, be irrelevant; but this is not always the case, e.g. when you stop trying to open the jar because it hurts your wrist. Wittgenstein's anatomical enumeration exhibits the same type *folding unto itself* we noticed before about pain. And this *folding unto itself* represents an opposite interest from what we are trying to bring out through the directional interpretation of sensation.

Notice that Wittgenstein does, indeed, make his argument from ignorance. He imagines that the individual in question is ignorant about what he is feeling; he expresses perplexity about what is over there. And, furthermore, irrelevance and ignorance are not really the same thing. Suppose that everything in the world

[28] *Philosophical Investigations,* §626.
[29] *Philosophical Investigations,* §626.

exhibited the same qualitative sensation to human touch. This monotony would be catastrophic: we would not touch a cake to see if it is baked, for example (and the cake is, in any relevant sense, *over there*). The person in Wittgenstein's example is not entirely satisfied with the hardness of what is *over there.* We find this to be the case because his sensations, as involved in *finding out what is over there,* are all important *to*, but no exhaustive *of*, his interest. By this I mean to say that to discover what is, in fact, *there*, is not limited to our sensations. – or not limited to whatever is enveloped in our sensations.

In the example, the individual appeals to his sensations. His appeal is an expression of his interest, and his sensations gain directionality through their involvement with his act. The individual *points* and *touches* with the stick in order to offer scope to his act. For instance when you miss a step, it characteristically feels like the step was not *there*. When you run against something in the dark, it feels like something hard was *there*. To miss, to run against, to point at > are expressions of the scope that characterizes the directionality of a sensation.

It would be strange, and off point, to try and restore the inferential picture Anscombe subsumed under the rubric of *clueless knowledge*. This sort of sensational empiricism would, in the end, have to appeal to a form of voluntaristic sensationalism; it would have to, *prima facie*, concede that an order such as "produce that tingling feeling in your thumb, and then put pressure on your index finger, and likewise on your middle finger and other fingers!" is an adequate paraphrase of '*grab* that bottle with strength!' And even if this sort of voluntarism was less specific, similar to the voluntarism Hart analyzed in the legal doctrines of Austin[30] the sort that is, very often, justified in some contexts, as for example, in a gymnastic class, a practice that, as matter of course, harbors orders such as 'stretch your quadriceps!', we might still be unable to understand why our ordinary thinking and acting has suffered such a reductive spin to the point of having us think about muscles we do not know the names of. Hart is quite right to maintain that we do not, save for special occasions, give descriptions of our actions in terms of muscular contractions; Anscombe's *clueless knowledge*, which is but one variation on the theme of *knowledge without observation*, will not harbor acts directed at particular muscles, not

[30] 'Acts of will and Responsibility' in *Punishment and Responsibility*, p.98.

because this cannot be done, but because such muscular atomism escapes our ordinary thoughts about actions.

Suppose that, while in front of a mirror, I gained the capacity to become invisible. I would at least be able to know I was *holding* a bottle of water, not by seeing my hand in the mirror, not even by *looking* at the bottle floating in the air (it could be suspended by translucent nylon strings), but by feeling the sensation of my grip. But, of course, this would be due to my act of grabbing the bottle; in a similar way, I know I am not inside the room when I hit my hand against a closed door, which is a sort of clue, even if now *clue* is a rather coarse notion, not at all fit for any empirical epistemology and, at any rate, again, as *over there* as it gets. I am not satisfied by the clue a sensation gives me, not *simpliciter*; in a similar manner, I am not satisfied by the parallactic facts provided by my vision. I do not act on the fact that things *seem* smaller from here; I do not act *as if* my visual sensations could evade measure and scale. And similarly it is but a mistake when the cake felt baked when I touched it yet turned out not to be, but I am satisfied if I am able to tell the doctor what sort of pain it is that I feel in my neck when I point to it, I like everyone do rely on this ability.

Distinction between a condition and a principle of cognition

34. Let us reconsider Hegel's image in relation to the use of 'I' in Wittgenstein's example "*I feel something*...." The directionality of the sensation is expressed in the first person. This helps us understand the plausibility of Hegel's image that self-consciousness would have its veins in nature because it is now brought into a more ordinary setting. This self-consciousness now deals with the presence and, of course, the importance of its sensations, intentions, and so on, and it does so as embodied; if I am permitted to slightly change Anscombe's phrase: *Self-Consciousness is knowledge of the object one is*.[31] And since we now are in the possession of the difference between a proximal interpretation of sensation and a directional one, we may ask: in which sense does the expressing *I* offer directionality to its sensations.

Before, we noticed that a consequence of being movable is the possession of thoughts that express *going somewhere to do something*. This is expressive of a sort

[31] "The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers Volume II*, p.34.

of immediacy, one that is quite insubstantial. There is, nevertheless, still some virtue to considering this immediacy more closely. Consider how we came to appreciate that this sort of immediacy was at the root of our reciprocal attribution of a *left* and a *right* to someone else, how it was at the root of apprehending another person as such. For this reason, the insubstantiality of this immediacy should not reside in its obviousness. Or better, as Hegel puts it, it is a loss for philosophy when this obviousness is conceived as a mere *condition* – it is a loss when we transform it into an *abstract form of the finitude of our intellect*.

Both Wittgenstein and Anscombe thought there was quite a bit to be understood in this sort of immediacy. Anscombe, for example, doubting the value of introspection (a method that perhaps could easily degenerate into the construction of a *self-image*, something that in her view sharply opposes self-knowledge), sought for answer that would be *substantial to who I am* in the sort of immediacy we express when we say "*I am standing.*" This is, recognizably, a Wittgensteinian thought: she did not seek, we might provisionally maintain, for something that offers a contrast to my *familiarity* with myself and the world; she did not seek, not in this text at least, an answer that presented itself as a form of *discovery*. (I do not mean to deny that there is such a discovery, nor that, as I shall say later, there is some opaqueness that threatens my knowledge of myself, and – my knowledge of who I am and ought to be.) With all of this, what I mean to say is that it is intriguing how Wittgenstein could, in the same train of thought, pass from: "Das uns nichts auffällt, wenn wir uns umsehen, im Raum herumgehen, unsere eigenen Körper fühlen etc., etc., das zeigt, wie natürlich uns eben diese Dinge sind" to "Die Selbstverständlichkeit der Welt drückt sich eben darin aus, das die Sprache nur sie bedeutet und nur sie bedeuten kann."[32]

What is most curious is that he could derive his *meta-philosophy* from our immediate experience of the world and ourselves; and I am arguing that this implies that Wittgenstein was keen on preserving the very same thing Hegel understood could be lost by making subjects into mere conditions of experience – namely, the notion of *a person*. In a rather Wittgensteinian way, I intend to take Anscombe's notion of immediacy rather seriously, although I do not wish to express myself in what I will call her minimal vocabulary.

[32] *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, §47.

The apprehension of immediacy

35. We already saw, *through our reciprocal judging*, how substantial this kind of immediacy is and how there is a particular significance to having a *right* and a *left*. We also saw how a sense of direction, in a space populated by a multiplicity of objects, is a condition of the actuality of these thoughts.

But let us further address the sort of abstraction the Hegelian thought about Self-Consciousness, as having its veins in nature, intends to revert (which I believe is in consonance with Anscombe's ideas on *the first person*).

The *abstract form* we have mentioned is a consequence of the need to address the conditions of the intelligibility of experience as such and the philosophical need in this problem. In virtue of this, not just an *I*, but *every I*, is abstracted into formality. In this way, the *I* becomes a mere condition, and as a condition it becomes a dogmatic subject (it becomes the guarantee that there always is a subject). But up until now, any notion we had of a subject concerned an acting and feeling subject. And I do not believe we have lost any *generality* (in the sense that just about everyone has a left and a right). Consequently, if there was any gain to this method of thinking, it was, in a way, to preserve generality without the sort of abstraction that would collapse *me* into a condition of *my* experience (which I take is the point of Hegel's image); and if this is not generality *sensu strictu*, then at least, I hope, it is enough to give us a perspective on the employment of such *real* expressions as *my left*, *my face* etc., or *real* in the Anscombian sense. But let us focus on the margin that is offered to us by the Hegelian critique of the *paralogism* argument. We have gained enough distance to consider the idea of a condition as a form of dogmatism; we have apprehended it as a result of an *attempt* at an explanation. Hegel's image follows from a Kantian thought, and later on Hegel did cast his old image from *Glauben und Wissen* in a distinctively Kantian language: "What does not disappear in all this is the 'I' as *universal*, whose seeing is neither a seeing of the tree nor of this house, but is simple seeing which, though mediated by the negation of this house, etc., is all the same simple and indifferent to whatever happens in it, to the house, the tree, etc."(*Phenomenology of Spirit,* §102) This simple seeing has no veins whatsoever; I suggest that this is the only way *it could* be indifferent to the house or the tree – the only way it could apprehend its *seeing* as such. But this is *the only* thing that does not disappear. So now the question is: does indifference to whatever mediates my thoughts, my self-apprehension as a condition of cognition, entail my indifference to myself? Hegel

replies: "The 'I' is merely universal like 'Now', 'Here', or 'This' in general; I do indeed *mean* a single 'I', but I can no more say what I *mean* in the case of the 'I' than I can in the case of the 'Now' and 'Here'"(*Phenomenology of Spirit,* §102)). 'Now' as absolute singularity, and also 'Here,' and 'This,' stand without acknowledgement of any kind. That is, *this* or *that*, *here* and *now* have lost all their differences, which are the very differences I look to acknowledge; and consequently, I only know my difference to other things in a formal relation.

To avoid the pond, I step to my right, he steps to his left: this would be a *reflexive* and a *reciprocal* thought that holds a connection to me *here and now.* But I am not indifferent to myself, or to him, or to the pond. And I do *mean* a single *I*. (I do mean the *I* that steps to the right in order not to fall into the pond.) This is not because I am in the possession of good criteria to refer to myself – I *am* immune to misidentifying myself in this way, as long as I am able to keep my healthy spontaneity – but because these are the immediate thoughts that I, A.A. usually have.[33] They are, if you wish, *die Art* of my being, and I mean this in the way, as I take Anscombe also to mean her phrase "E.A. about which I did learn that it is a human being,"[34] in a *species-specific* way. *Sub specie electricity* I could preserve my absolute indifference, as Hegel puts it. As electricity, I would be a simple *Force* indifferent to its law.[35] But E.A. did learn that she was a human being, a single human being as we are entitled to suppose, and so she did learn how to *mean* something by using *E.A.* and even *I.* So we, with our bodies, are indeed a principle of actions and postures insofar as we *mean* something by our thoughts about these acts, postures, etc.; or better, insofar as we *mean* something when we say *"over there, to your left!"*

When electricity passes through a wire, it exploits the cable's conduciveness. One feature of its indifference is, precisely, that it can change bodies, or rather pass through any number of bodies that allow it to do so. Electricity is a *Force.* We only *apply* force, and our application of force, for example, to a boat we are pushing, is the sort of thing we *mean* and constitutes the sort of I-thought we might catch ourselves having. And *these* thoughts, *my* thoughts about pushing, can be verified, as Anscombe puts it, by *this* body that is pushing the boat. Now we should remember our previous

[33] "The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers Volume II*, p.34.
[34] "The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers Volume II*, p.34.
[35] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §152.

discussion about the mechanical possibilities of a machine's body. I can, following Aristotle,[36] enumerate a number of facts about my pushing. These are considerations that would not be available to me if, one day, I were to wake up *sub species Felis catus*. But the reflexive apprehension of my body, Anscombe's "I can also feel one part of my body with another,"[37] is not so much an infallible method of verification, but more of a matter of course; it is as much a matter of course as the fact that the person who pushes the boat in Aristotle's example has to have both of his feet firmly planted on the shore. My body allows me to know facts about it just in this way, such as these substantial facts and even its limits. And as such, my thoughts about acts and postures cannot partake in the electricity's indifference; *I* cannot partake in such an indifference, nor can I assume that my body is a mechanism at my service (that my body contains a closed set of reproducible movements *in potentia*). We can observe this in the following example. When I verify that my fingers are correctly placed on the frets of an electric bass, this may be but the incipient expression of my bass playing. And in this case I *do* mean my looking at my fingers, which is to say that I have stopped playing a poorly executed bass line and now look down to see where my fingers are. Although I do not mean with this example to say, contrary to Anscombe's *animus* in both "The First Person" and *Intention*, that all of these facts are simply given to me by observation. It will be the case, if all goes well in my practice, that I will stop looking at my fingers and it will be no accident that my bass line sounds much better. But *my fingers* are *at a distance* from me here. It is not a matter of how it feels to play a certain bass line, nor is it a matter concerning the quality of the sensations I feel at the tip of my fingers. And, when I do no longer look at my fingers, it is the case that I have become accustomed to *playing,* not that I have learned to recognize a set of sensations. This is what I take Anscombe to mean when she says that sometimes I can give a much more exact account of what I am doing when what I do is *at distance from me*.[38] And I take *at a distance from me* to mean that which is *over there*, even if this *over there* designates a posture I take towards my own hands.

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[36] *Movement of animals*, 699a.
[37] The First Person' in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers Volume II*, p.34.
[38] *Intention*, §30.

The previous thought I put forward about *being*, the species-specific thought, should not be read as an attempt to reduce the matter at hand to something that could figure under the rubric of *my animality*. I do not know how I could even conceive of this save, perhaps, as a form of offense. Thus the *immediacy* we are trying to grasp possesses the dignity of my person – a dignity that can be offended and sustain injury. And so neither is this immediacy an attempt to capture a sub-personal sense of myself, nor is it an attempt to exhaust all answers to the present question with the fact that I am an animal; rather, it is simply the case that, primitively, *I* am a person. Ultimately, I wish to say that this immediacy becomes, in the present argument, Self-Consciousness. (Plainly speaking, what else is the sort of thing I do when I consider my hands in learning how to play the bass?) But, of course, I do not *add* Self-Consciousness to my body, as you add electricity to the machine in order to make its mechanism move.

Having thought

36. When we consider this sort of immediacy, we are considering the capacity to have thoughts that are material to the action of a given person. This is a starting point to conceive of the expression of *I* as a principle. But we have to understand that the notion of this expression is not merely the enunciation of the *presence* of a thought. And I believe that this entails understanding how this notion of expression I am putting forward inherits some of the sense of personal dignity Anscombe appealed to in her use of the phrase *offences against the person*. By this I mean that any standing conception of *immediacy*, any conception of the I-thoughts I have, could not prevail if I were to seriously occupy the position of someone who reduces themselves to something else. Consider the arsenal of expressions Anscombe goes through in the formulation of her argument: *this object*, *this body*, *and this human animal*. Could anyone in such an epistemologically unstable position, if we were to take this idiom completely seriously, even pose these questions? It is rather clear that if anything is immediately knowable at all, then this will surely include that I have no doubts as to what sort of thing I am (even if I might momentarily lose the sense of *who* I am). Anscombe does, indeed, grant us this. In a situation of total sensory deprivation, I would have nothing that *this* would latch on to, and I might still be able to utter *I* (of course, this sort of ontological homelessness does not follow from my sensory deprivation). But it would be senseless to question if I could still utter *I* had I been *ab*

initio deprived from *this body*, or *this human animal.* (To know what sort of consciousness is the consciousness of something disembodied would be a relevant question here, as would be what it is not to know what privation is. I believe that that question about a disembodied consciousness is, in some measure, similar to asking if I can know *what it is like to be a bat*, which is a question that is utterly senseless.)

37. This class of thoughts, these immediate thoughts are part of Anscombe's positive account in "The First Person." As an elucidation of her conclusion 'I am this thing right here' she offers the following: "…of whose action *this* idea of action is an idea, of whose movements *these* ideas of movements are ideas, of whose posture *this* idea of posture is the idea."[39] A question arises from this statement as to how exactly would the items mentioned – action, movement, and posture – be intelligible to Anscombe's readers? These propositions have to convey some information, if these are to be read as *real propositions* in the way Anscombe insists.

The *thing right here* expresses itself *as the possessor* of the items mentioned; it does not simply express these, since, to use Hegelian terms, no one merely expresses his own finitude. And now the question arises as to a person's possession of a self-conception regarding their own discursivity. I take this into consideration because an individual, at least minimally, can be in the possession of these very thoughts without having any opinion about a self-conception. This person has already distinguished herself from her thoughts; this means to say, this person *does* possess the concept of experience as such. And this is manifested in her *immediate* self-ascription of these thoughts and also in being immune to missing the subject of these very thoughts. As Strawson puts it, in practice, the reference to the immediate possession of experiences is not lost even if there is no criteria of personal identity at work[40] – But notice that with this we get ever closer to a *condition of experience*; I do not even mean that a *self-image*, or a biographical self-apprehension has to be in place in order for one to have such thoughts (neither do I wish to discount their importance) – I am simply concerned with the pervasive *passive* aspect of having thought. (If we are able to keep Hegel's suggestion in mind, we may recover how Anscombe's expression of *possession* contains *something further*. This partially amounts to not

[39] "The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers,* Volume II, p. 33.
[40] *The Bounds of Sense,* pp. 164-166.

giving in to the *evermore exultant character of the structure and function of cognition*, the master-thought behind *Glauben und Wissen*.)

We should remember that this form of immediacy might discount its own peculiar simplicity. For this reason, at this stage of the argument, it is pertinent to be reminded that such a form of immediacy belongs to a healthy, spontaneous mind. This is a mind that does not, in principle, ask for a *who* with respect to its possession of thoughts and intentions. Ultimately, it is this sort of healthy and spontaneous relation to a world, and to one's thought about the world, that Anscombe will address *knowledge without observation* (although I would prefer to forego the use of this idiom until we have addressed it more explicitly).

We do not ask *who* the subject of our thoughts and intentions is. But, if we consider the items Anscombe refers to demonstratively, we discern something *further*: we are capable of applying, and recognizing, the scope that offers these a direction. This is to say that these items allow us to consider them in a distinct sense, which is distinct from the consideration of their *presence simpliciter*.

If we consider these thoughts and their involvement in an action, we restore the sense of immediacy that is familiar to something that is not simply immovable. A movement and a posture *as in* climbing a ladder gain a direction: going up the ladder, doing such and such movements, not missing steps when assuming each climbing posture, etc. This peculiar involvement in an action shows one aspect of the discursive nature of this very intellect, which is not merely conditional, nor enumerative of the possession of thoughts. Although it does not yet tell us the point of such discursivity, the plain fact that one is indeed capable of expressing one's thoughts. But let us first begin by focusing on the isolation of one feature so as to explain this form of compatibility, namely the locative aspect of these thoughts.

A suggestion, locative thinking as an initial intuition concerning the possession of immediacy

38. Locative thoughts relate to a person within an environment, and this point in turn, to a general conception of a world that contains it. They relate an interest with respect to an environment, which is in itself a section of a world; it is not just any section, but a section considered to be relevant as a direction for a subject. Even if we find ourselves somewhere we did not choose to be, it is still the odd place we are not supposed to be. We occasionally get lost, and getting lost overthrows our sense of

direction (although it does not make it impossible to relate, in an immediate way, to our surroundings wherever it may be that we find ourselves). We find ourselves where we are not supposed to be, and now we have to get back on track. It is in this sense that although we may still be capable of uttering *"I am at x,"* this is in no way synonymous with *"I have arrived."* And we may even find ourselves incapable of even discerning the place in question. At this moment we might utter an unspecified thought, such as *"This isn't x!"* which is an expression that gains its pertinence from the directionality of going to *x*. The directionality we are addressing contains the world as its home; we return to a familiar thought here: *the principle we are considering manifests a certain kind of dependence.*

The person who utters *I am this thing right here* locates herself. There does not even have to be a reason for her to do so – she does not have to be going somewhere, or be trying to inform someone she is on the phone with, who is looking down from a balcony, of her location in a crowd below. Rather, and in much simpler terms, perhaps too simple, I mean that the *here* in *I am this thing right here* has to have a location, *even if* this person is pointing at her chest (and by pointing she does not mean to point out her heart, or liver, or soul). We may even appeal to Anscombe's arsenal of preferred expressions: if I am this human animal, or this body, *then* I am somewhere.

I do wish to include spontaneity in my immediate possession of thoughts about actions, postures, etc., that I am *here*. In other words, that I am in a library, at a university, in a city, in a state, in a country; I could give you my current address. And this *does* naturalize my apprehension of my thought about actions, postures, etc. I do not have to, as in Anscombe's joke, pause to think some of these thoughts; I have these thoughts all the time. And hence I do not merely express myself as an empty ego-concept, as capable of having thought *in principle*, but rather as capable of actively making use of the thoughts I have. In a deprivation tank, I am nowhere; I am not going anywhere, and my spontaneity is perhaps only filled we anguish. Our imagination does allow us to ponder such a horrible scenario, but it is immediately checked by our sense of reality; we immediately remember the immense privilege it is to have spontaneity and all that comes with it. In the deprivation tank, I am nowhere and close to nothing at all – nothing is close to me or far away; I am no longer *this thing right here* because there is no here and I am not even what I used to be anymore.

An interpretation of the demonstrative in 'these ideas of movement, posture, etc.'

39. We may raise doubts about Anscombe's use of demonstratives in the identification of these kinds of thoughts. Is Anscombe referring to her particular ideas in ostensive acts?[41] The question is to disentangle her use of demonstratives, in this particular context, from the sense that depends on acts of ostension. She never does claim, as a private linguist might be tempted to do, to give any phenomenological description of her current experience, which is something that would fall within the proximal interpretation of these thoughts. Any detail of this kind would be quite useless in her announcing herself to us (unless one of us is a doctor, and in that case her announcement would be different, as it could indeed be about the location of the pain). The sense of her use of demonstratives arises only at a very specific moment; *it is a problem that emerges only when addressing unmediated thoughts*. But we may provide a context that is not artificial for the emergence of these considerations. To signal out *these* thoughts about actions, movements and postures is a way of revealing self-knowledge. This kind of knowledge, as Anscombe puts it, is knowledge *of the object one is* or *of the human animal one is;* We can take this to mean something quite trivial (as we have already discussed) without the exultant character of substituting one form of dogmatism for a different one (in a Hegelian vein). Of course the object that we are is rather substantial for gaining of knowledge about ourselves; it grounds, amongst other things, our capacity to have a *left*, which is something quite useful for the thoughts we might catch ourselves having, e.g. *I am going downstairs*.

Now this particular use of demonstratives, the use that identifies these thoughts and indexes them to a given person – if these are not exhausted by their apprehension *simpliciter* – has to allow our understating of *her* thoughts *as* her thoughts. Hence the expression, *this thought about action* yields some facts about her practical reasoning, namely the sort of reasoning that both I and her employ in order to act. And, certainly, the sense that is employed to identify her thoughts as hers may be useful, for example, as an assertion about its superior quality. (Imagine we are both attempting to solve the same problem. Then one of us says: *I got it! This is how we should do it*. Nothing prevents us from sharing a thought, although the instrumentality of my thought as significantly different from her thought is still preserved. We could

[41] Kenny raises doubts about this use of demonstratives. See "The First Person" in *Intention and Intentionality,* pp. 6-12.

then find ourselves in the following dialogue: *are you thinking the same thing?! …Ok, you lift it and I will hold it still!* No private linguist would be interested in the discursive aspect of these thoughts since his interest does not concern the employment of these thoughts at all; it is not a matter of asserting his thoughts for him, but rather of how he came to be able to speak, at all.)

In spite of this, the minimal sense Anscombe expresses herself with in this particular essay still lacks the character of an ordinary expression (even though I do not doubt that her point concerns the instrumentality of such thoughts). By this I mean that her expression still lacks any sort of resemblance to the idiom we employ when we address our reflexivity. This is perhaps a consequence of Anscombe's interest in dispelling the *deep-rooted grammatical illusion*, and this is something we do not have to share with here. We may be interested in gaining knowledge of a proper conception of the expression *I*, in the positive sense of understanding our reflexive and reciprocal thoughts, without having to stay clear of anything that might come close to a substantial conception. If we have clarification regarding the concepts involved – a condition of cognition, *property* of thoughts, the directional sense of sensations, etc. – we do not have to insist on paraphrasing away our conception of an expressing *I*. We may, carefully, start speaking about *our* experiences and thoughts without having to express ourselves as *a thing*.

So the disentangling might actually proceed by converting her *these* or *this* into *my*. Her use of *this*, nevertheless, is only sensible to her listeners if it picks out *her* thoughts about *her* actions. It cannot mean that the *sense* of her use of the concept of action, or movement, is glued to her as hers; she does not, indeed, insist on the exclusivity of her thoughts like the solipsist might. It is, presumably, this sense of *my* that is involved in the asymmetries, revealed through the gain of first-personal knowledge, which are the characteristically privileged or characteristically limited ways we have of possessing such knowledge. We can see this in the following example: imagine you are taking your wallet out of your back pocket. You know that you are doing this. What you do not know, but I know, is that when you took your wallet out of your back pocket, you dropped your house keys in the process.[42] It is this sense of *my* that is verifiable in descriptions – the sort of descriptions that putatively contrast with *my* knowledge of what I am doing, or descriptions that cannot

[42] "The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers* Volume II, p. 26.

but to be about *this* body.[43] In the same way, *My left is your right* is only stable if we recognize our subjective positions without damaging the sense of the proposition that conveys information as constituting a real proposition. It is in this sense that Anscombe's *this* implies *my*.

40. *"My left is your right"* is an intrinsically reciprocal thought, and one that is grounded in the reflexive capacity expressed in the use of *my*. Presently, however, I wish to address the absence of context. We have to eliminate her presentation as starting with an announcement and substitute it with a convenient necessity; *"My left is your right"* may be nothing more than the expression of convenience.

This convenience is to be read as a particular necessity felt in common contexts. And in these cases, the position of a first person, that is, that one is the subject of one's own thoughts about oneself is assumed to begin with. A question regarding the affirmation of this does not even arise. In light of this, we do not have to become blinded by our anxiety to dispel any positive conception of the first person subject at all. We do not have to eliminate the attempt at a conception, or feel that we must paraphrase it into something more tangible. The knowledge that you have a *left* is convenient, and we do not ever have to be tempted to extrapolate it into something more dogmatic than that.

An excursus: the embodied knowledge implied by the possession of the concept of agency – over here and over there

41. In these propositions discussed above, we encounter the deployment of egocentric concepts. These presuppose the capacity of a given person to locate herself properly in a spatial context. This context provides the frame of reference for the use of the egocentric concepts such as "my" and "yours," but also, "here" and "there."

Let us address the sense of this "here" when deployed by *both* subjects who share a frame of reference. This concept is, of course, also intelligible apart from the context of a reciprocal relation in a shared space. It can be the "here" of an individual subject as he tries to find his way through a city; and it can be shared in a context where both subjects are not present in the same spatial location, as when someone calls another person on the phone to ask for directions – one says to the other: "Yes,

[43]"The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers* Volume II, p. 35.

now I am here." In our simple case, the formation of a shared spatial "here" implies two subjects sharing a given space from a personal perspective. What are the resources for a constitution such as this?

The constitution will imply the position of the bodies of the subjects; it will imply that they are bodily agents occupying a particular space. But it is not limited to this aspect, since the mirroring relation presupposes elements that are apart from their body. The constitution of the frame of reference, which supports the propositions above, integrates two different perspectives from two distinct subjects as embodied agents. This integration is a conflation of interests and horizons in the world (as can be expressed in: *'that thing there behind you"*).

The reason why these are termed *agential bodies* is related to a feature the deployment of egocentric concepts allows, namely their variation in relation to a *shifting* point: *a form of movement*. Both Taylor and Evans make this point.[44] When we refer to paradigmatic objects, such as the sky or the ground, we do not provide an exhaustive explanation for the use of concepts such as *up* or *down* (which does not exclude the active fixing of such paradigmatic objects to assist orientation). The explanation has to contain the use of these egocentric concepts in the context of actions. But this does not, not *per se*, overthrow the stability these concept gain within the world we act. No one who is suspended from his feet in midair thinks that *up* is where the floor is and *down* where the sky is. For another example, we consider that the books on my table are to my right or to my left depending on where I stand in my living room. These remarks, however, are intended to bring into to view the *familiarity* that comes with the possession of these concepts. Moreover, familiarity in this context is familiarity with one's body. To consider that my head is *up* does not stand on equal measure with the sky as a paradigmatic fixing point of directionality. When I am underground, the ground is up; but my head is never, in this way, susceptible to a shift. When I am suspended in midair and walking on my hands, I do not cease to know that *now* everything is upside down; similarly I do not, while I hold my toothbrush, in front of a mirror, give myself the impression that my right hand is my left hand (even when writing appears confusing when in front of a mirror).

[44] *The Varieties of Reference*, p. 156.

42. Let us consider the capacity of two agents to create a shared frame of reference. This frame is not abstracted from the spatial physical order and it cannot be. We can see this, for instance, when we position our subjects in a building: they will deploy the same relevant concepts in their shared frame of reference, and integrate these into a physical and spatial order, when they are given a simple indication of where something is in that building; an indication of this kind could be something like "*It is right there, to your left, behind the door*."

The *agential* aspect appears here as a necessity for the correct conception of the activities involving these concepts. Our first subject presupposes that right in front of him is a person with the capacity to correctly deploy and understand these concepts. And he assumes that, given the location of the other subject, these allow for a certain kind of shift. His presupposition is guided by the intelligibility of the constraints a given space exerts upon his actions. (These are constraints such as material restrictions within a physical space, e.g. tables you have to walk around or doors that impede you from going into a room.)

When giving directions, one subject assumes the *usefulness* of his directions in guiding the other subject's actions. This usefulness has to be understood in the context of a reciprocal relation; when giving directions, one is not merely providing a description of one available way. One gives directions with respect to not any just old way, e.g. a straight line from the point where the other person is standing to the desired destination, but a way of *getting there*. Directions *are* descriptions of indications relative to a particular physical space; these are *descriptions of potential intentional actions*. (In this sense, these share an aspect of an order. These descriptions accommodate the conditions for their execution.)

The locative aspect of the space can also be shared with reference to the function of the space and the objects that populate it. For example, imagine I am within a house talking to someone who is in the kitchen while I am in the living room. My shouting "Bring the salt with you" is a way of anticipating an intentional action. This feature of reciprocity depends on our knowledge of, say, the house we are in: the other person is *over there* where the salt also is. And, if we are both in the kitchen, I may ask him to *take* the salt into the living room since we are both over here (where the salt is). Of course, I do not refer to him as *that thing over there* when I shout for the salt; but, in a way, he is that thing over there, although not a thing that is outside the confinement of my reciprocity. His being *over there*, for me – and, if I call for

him, his *over here*, for him – conceals the sense that he is indeed a human animal with legs, arms and so on (in sum, with a body); although, now, in our reciprocal thinking, he is that human animal, just like I am this one, the animal that could, potentially, follow the same paths as I do, were I to give him directions. A statue is over there, and even if this statue has a human form, even if it is the statue of a person, its *Existeznform* is *stasis*. The statue is, in this important sense, outside the confinement of my reciprocity, even though we *share* a space. We do share a space, but the statue and I could not share a horizon, nor could we share the task that makes this horizon possible. The statue is, perhaps, decoration, or a reminder of someone or some event. But we find this statue, in any case, to be a fact of my, and others', dwelling.)

To share a space

43. Consider sharing a house, or a library. We do act within spaces that facilitate our actions, and we arrange these spaces to contain objects, tools, and people (who may be working). The *setting* of orientation points is done within a world that we make familiar: consider how objects are disposed within a space, e.g. the display of tools at a hardware store, and also consider how the very form of a hammer anticipates our grip. Things and places are *over here* or *over there*, closer to both of *us* or closer to *you*. Closeness is crucial to our mobile lives, as is, in equal measure, distance; it is as such a mark of the locative for us who have a body. Unlike plants in vases, we can get further away from where we are now, get away from something or someone, and also closer to somewhere or someone. (These remarks pertain to an attempt at the interpretation of the phrase "I am this thing *here*"[45] in connection with the idea that *knowledge without observation* is related to *knowledge of the position of my limbs*, as employed in *Intention*.)

The expression of unmediated thoughts – the contraction and expansion of reflexivity: I, my, and myself

44. The fact that we are the principle of the direction of those thoughts about actions, movements, and postures, provides some measure of knowledge about what kind of thing we are. And even if, provisionally, we used expressions such as *the human animal*, the sort of knowledge we have been trying to attain does not concern a

[45] "The First Person" in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind, Collected Philosophical Papers* Volume II, p. 32.

contribution to a list of zoological alternatives. This is a list that could include, for example: the vertical ape, the tool-making ape, the brainy ape, the territorial ape, the naked ape, and so on.[46] This is not at all an attempt to gaze at a species in a museum, perhaps amongst other species, nor a way of putting some considerable distance between me and the species I belong to in order to facilitate my zoological endeavors and discern the distinctive trait of the human animal. I only mention all of this because the sense in which Anscombe used this expression, the sense I have been following, is not the zoological sense at all. Of course this marks an aspect of philosophical thinking – to apprehend human spontaneity *without* losing its materiality, which can mean the human body or the entire world. It is more of a threat to philosophical thinking, such has been the history of philosophy, that one could drift away, or contract one's thinking to the point of postulating the autonomy of this very thinking – perhaps, because, amongst other things, we are capable of apprehending that we have thoughts – than to indulge in the sort of search for a distinctive trait (of which the above list is a reflex). The distinctive trait *is*, we assume, familiar evidence, although not unquestioned familiarity, but still, familiarity nevertheless.

Hegel once put into words the sort of *contraction* I have in mind. For him, this was a sort of diremption, a moment of difference with a perennial character where the recognition that our *philosophia perennis* is a form of contraction: "In thinking, I *am free*, because I am not in an *other*."[47]

The truth of this thought expresses, again, something general about what one *is*. It is, as is the thought that one is a human animal, an expression of a form of generality. This thought recognizes that there is *another*, although not in the reciprocal sense we have addressed before, perhaps because the point of this reflexive act of recognition is not the other but oneself – for whomever thinks that thought. The notion that "the manifold self-differentiating expanse of life, with all its detail and complexity, is the object on which desire and work operate"[48] could be annihilated by the truth of this thought, is not difficult to recognize. For example, when I think, I realize *my* singularity, not the distinctive trait of the *species* that is now wholly other to me in a logical relation. But I cannot do away with thinking what is *other*,

[46] This list can be found in Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape: a zoologist's study of the human animal.*
[47] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §197.
[48] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §199.

whatever it may be, if I am to be able to think what I individually am. At this point, there is even more that threatens the truth of this very thought. The idea that I am free, *in thought*, does not imply that I am free *for* everything else that is other than me. This is not the case simply because I can be prey for other animals, but because others *like me* could be indifferent to me. And if they are indifferent to me, they can then threaten my freedom by harming me, or by simply ignoring me, leaving me in complete isolation. The thought that my entire species could be wholly *other* to me is, if this is to mean that I could be indifferent to it and not suffer under the indifference from it, completely absurd. Despite this, I do not mean to imply (not even to suggest the image) that everybody else, whoever it may be, *is* me – I *know* they are not. The reason, nevertheless, why I experience some measure of urgency at the thought that I *ought not* to be indifferent to others, and everything else (or why I hope that others will not be indifferent to me), springs from the fact that I have *learned* that *the good* and *the true*[49] are something to be found in *this* world and in *others*. And I find this thought does not solemnly reflect on my animal dependence either. I do know I could keep myself intact, that is alive and sane, even if everybody else was gone (at least for a while), but even so my Self-Consciousness would not turn into that of the solipsist; probably, I would just feel lonely. And this dependence that I feel upon others is also not an unambiguous fact of my existence; it is, amongst other things, both the source of my comfort and of the many offences I take. But the truth of the thought expressed above is, nevertheless, invaluable: I do know I am not *in* an *other*, in no conceivable way; in this same sense, I know that the world and my body condition me at the same time as I know that others are, and have been indifferent to me; and I know that I can be indifferent to them, although I could hardly be indifferent to the facts of my cognition.

Perhaps, the same idea can be expressed negatively. It may be expressed as what we are not: "My soul is not I; and if only souls are saved, I am not saved, nor is any man" as Aquinas said.[50] In my present condition, whatever the temptations are, either to abstract myself into complete generality or complete singularity, all that I can express as myself is bound to be far less special than any of the alternatives. And it is bound to carry with it some rather distinct tasks, which would be entirely insubstantial to any soul, formal condition of experience or singularity.

[49] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §200.
[50] Aquinas, *Commentary on Paul I Corinthians 15*.

45. And yet, this is only one way that I have to grasp myself – a *via negativa*. St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* often appeals to the reflexive. And these appeals, the appeals to be understood by others, employ the reflexive in an unequivocal sense: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart."[51] That what I say is the truth, that there could, in principle, be a verification of the truth I speak, that this truth is all important, that which witnesses what I speak is above us all, and yet, that all I wish is to communicate this to others, is as much of a full-blown reflexive expression as it is a reciprocal hope. That he is the possessor of an unceasing pain, and that now the sense of pain is not merely proximal, or there is no question if the proximal quality of his pain could only be for him as it would be for the solipsist, but that it is, in his speaking, principally for us. He does not *refer* to his conscience, or he *does*, but not as a guarantee that he in fact *is*, but so it can be for us. And our understanding of Paul as the *possessor* of that very conscience, and the pain it bears, does not turn out to be more, or less, intangible than if he were referring to his body.

Paul writes, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites…."[52] That his blood can, as can everyone's blood, hold political value, that is, that he can refer to his body and its vitality as holding such value is a mark of the *expansion* of the reflexive. Now, some of what is wholly other to me shares of the *same* principle of vitality as I do. But what does the *same* blood mean? My kinsmen do not have the same blood as I do, because they are not biologically attached to my circulation. What plagues my circulation, what threatens the human animal I am, does not threaten my kinsmen *in propria persona*. And, moreover, it is a fact about the human animals we are that we stand in blood relations, and that we know these blood relations. It is also true that I could stand with those who are my kinsmen *in the flesh* as I could with those others who are my kinsmen *in faith*. And now, my reflexive conception of myself has expanded even more. I mean, that my kinsmen in the flesh are Israelites, but my kinsmen in faith are not even that. I have long since drifted away from the thought that it is my own blood that unites me with what is other – which is to mean that the confinements of my reciprocity have grown. Paul has reminded us that we

[51] Romans 9:1-2.
[52] Romans 9:3-4. Cf. K. Barth Epistle to the Romans, 335-338.

know our own blood is not in *another*. And although blood like mine can be in another, I am (as blood, if I could be my own blood) not in another. My brethren, those for whom I could wish a curse upon myself, those I worry about to the point of my own annihilation, do not have to possess blood like mine. The vitality flowing through their veins is not the *same* as that which flows in mine. But it does not flow less than mine – Not for me! But let us take a step back – I am not my blood, nor my veins, nor my brethren. I *am* made out of veins and blood and I do worry, to the point of an unceasing pain, about my brethren. Nevertheless, this thought is not complete. At this point, we see that when we expand this thought, it brings much more into view than we expected at first. The sorrow that the biblical voice expresses is with respect to the fact that I indeed can be indifferent to my brethren, and so I am, as they are.

The expansion of reflexive towards the world: the relations of dependence and avoidance between persons and objects, products and activities

46. There are distinctively reflexive concepts that apply to material inanimate objects such as: *"a is useful," "b is poisonous,"* and *"c is harmful."* All of these predicates denote a quality of the subject. But to denote this quality presupposes a certain relation that grounds the truthful applicability of the respective predicate. This relation presupposes something or someone to whom the objects, which fall under the predicates above, would be useful, poisonous or harmful.[53]

The objects to which the predicates above apply will condition our activities. These things, in an unavoidable sense, *surround us*. As objects of work, or to be worked with, they may be transformable. Their value can further our activities, and is both preserved and increased through our working on and with them. This notion of value condenses, in a subtle way, our *presence* in the material world. We imagine this presence as activity or as dependent activity. In other words, we are thinking of our *nature* as dependent upon that which is demarcated from it *by* having its own nature. Hence, Hart and Honoré: "Common experience teaches us that, left to themselves, the things we manipulate, since they have a 'nature' or characteristic way of behaving, would persist in states or exhibit changes different from those which we have learnt to bring about in them by our manipulation."[54] These things do not persist according to

[53] The examples are taken from Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part I: Science of Logic,* p. 248.
[54] *Causation in the law*, p. 29.

their nature *because* of our presence; they stop the course of their characteristic activity the minute they enter one of our activities. (I presume that this is exactly what furthers Hart and Honoré's interest in a *central* notion of causality.)

We can visualize this in the following example. The mirror in any room started out as glass and, like any other raw material, reflects back a necessity of ours; it was, as a raw material, consumed through distinct processes and became different through its involvement in an activity. Through this notion, we approach a sense of consumption; further, we discern the nature of our own dependence as something that demands stability. Peaches are peeled off before being canned, and metal is galvanized so it will not rust. It is an abnormality to find a peach with a peel inside a can of peaches, and it is an inconvenience when your patio table rusts. We may say that some of these objects *resist* an imposed form, but this is to be expected. Defect and inconvenience are given relatively to the stability that prompts their usefulness.

These things surround us, usually, in a stable manner – even if, in some cases, the corresponding activities are usually things worth pursuing in spite of this or that accident. Dependence is, in this sense, the practical knowledge one has of how these objects have constituted and will continue to constitute an activity. It is not *accidental* that one transforms them, as Aristotle would put it, nor is it an accident that we came to know how to do so. It is this sense of consumption that we apprehend in many of our descriptions of intentional actions – we apprehend *productive consumption*.

Someone who weaves a basket binds a material together, someone who fixes an electrical cable binds it back together; the first *makes* something new, while the latter *repairs* something old. Our activities concern production, but they also concern the maintenance of products. This is, in turn, the way these objects surround us and the way they enter our descriptions of actions. Our activity and their existence as products unfold together in time:

Determinatio est negatio.

And the question that imposes itself now is: what does it mean to deny something its nature? I wish to suggest that we find some difficult aspects here. If on the one hand, there is an intuitive notion of having power over something, or even someone, there is, on the other hand, a less intuitive notion, namely, to do violence to something or someone. Sticking with Hart and Honoré's concept of a *characteristic*

behavior, what is the difference between grooming a lawn and grooming your hair? You interfere with the growth of both, do you not? And both would be considerably longer had you not interfered with them? Determination is the conferral of identity – *the* lawn, *the* hairdo – but it is, simultaneously, a loss *for* whatever is determined. Before, I mentioned the notion of *resistance* when speaking about some of our products. Now, notice how all of these considerations are a form of grasping our dependence; we *do* depend on some things that offer us resistance. And now, I think, we have marked at least one important difference between hair and grass, although this difference is not a novelty for this argument: hair is part of a body (human hair that is *my* hair); the grass on the lawn *is not.* But it still feels like a liberty to say that the lawn *resists*. And it feels less so, nevertheless, if I think of this argument with respect to the animals I consume. All of this is a reflex of my nature and the nature of what is *another* to me; this is an other upon which I, nevertheless, depend. The fact that *'a is useful'* does not permit my ignorance about what that thing *a* is. More accurately, I cannot keep my knowledge within the confinements of what is useful *in it* for me. The proteins in the flesh of the animal I consume are not the animal, and similarly I am not my flesh. In spite of this, my consumption of the proteins does destroy the animal in the same way as I would be destroyed if someone consumed my flesh. Our interpretation of the predicate *'a is useful'* becomes more dense the minute we realize that it has application to many species that are far from being alien to us – species that are meaningful far beyond the definition of their utility. I mean, far from being exhausted by their utility.

It seems that the passage from power to violence occurs on the basis of a reflexive identification, which I am trying to grasp as a feature of its expansion: molded plastic does not suggest any sort of violent negation to me, since it does not even have a vegetative nature. But I do shiver if I see an animal being shot, precisely on account of its animal nature, on account of what this thing has now *lost*. This last thought about loss is complicated. Dependence entails loss, and it does so in a distinct way for us. For example, the extinction of a particular natural object, or animal, can imply the extinction of an entire activity. Human activity is not an unlimited creative power; I cannot create the deer I hunt, nor can I be a deer hunter if there are no longer any deer to be hunted. Generically, *consumption re-creates the need*,[55] as Marx says.

[55] *Grundrisse,* p.91-92.

Consumption may extinguish, not necessarily the need, that which satisfies it. And so, if I hunt all the deer on an island, I extinguish them, and by implication perhaps myself; my violence against them becomes violence directed at myself, which is but a reminder that I determine *them* in order to determine myself – and here, again, consumption is production, but now *as* the reproduction of myself. If what is an other – grass or birds – could resist us, we would perish under their resistance; *we* would, in turn, not resist. And even though we have the power to change their course, their characteristic behavior, we do not have the power to change their nature (although we do violence to their nature, and deny them their nature). The history of our ontology is therefore a shared creation, and many of our additions to it, no doubt, examples of our creative power, are exercises of violence against what is an other.

Consider the obvious modal dependence of the form of a given activity upon the existence of a natural object: there is corn farming, with all its techniques, because there is corn. And therefore we keep seeds; we protect the corn, further its existence and its growth. And so, in a way, the fact that corn enters our circulation protects its nature; our dependence on corn becomes *care* for its nature. We raise corn, or we produce corn in order to consume it, and so we produce *an other* so as to reproduce ourselves individually (*Individual consumption*).[56] The care I speak of may amount to a sort of organized preemption: acting on the knowledge that, putatively, a wedge could be driven between us and that which we depend on. And none of this excludes the fact that we may be the ones who will drive that very wedge. But the predicate *"a is useful"* is still not interpreted to the fullest extent. An exhaustive interpretation would still have to consider the possibility that *care* may also amount to a form of violence. It would have to fully interpret the possibility that there is a passage from care to violence that takes place under the rubric of *that which is useful*.

We can observe this in the following: Before recording became digital, there were tape operators who worked in recording studios. When recording switched from tape to digital, these operators were discarded together with those tape machines they operated on. The extinction of a profession is not necessarily the extinction of a product; it is rather the extinction of its use-value. (The use-value serves as a reminder that actions and their respective descriptions may deteriorate during the course of history.) But now something crucial has happened: a profession has become

[56] *Das Kapital,* p.185.

something that can also be consumed – actions *are* an object of consumption. And, if your profession perishes, so do some of your actions, and perhaps, so do you. Thus, I depend on the actions of another and, by extension, on another person; my actions (say, my actions as a tape operator) depend on what these actions mean to others, on their value to an other.

I believe that our considerations pertaining to the passage from power to violence apply here, although with many important qualifications that have yet to be made.

Let us consider the following idea:

> Wenn also vorhandene Produkte nicht nur resultate, sondern auch Existenzbedingungen des Arbeitsprozesses sind, ist anderseits ihr Hineinwerfen in ihn, also ihr Kontakt mit lebendiger Arbeit, das einzige Mittel, um diese Produkte vergangener Arbeit als gebruachswerte zu erhalten und zu verwirklichen.[57]

The assertion of the relation between these two concepts – product/work – belongs to the notion of *dependence* that we are investigating. Let us consider the following aspect: products are not only the results of processes applied to raw materials; they are also a condition of the existence of *further* work. Our dependence on the world and others is not something that has to be first acknowledged in order to become an actuality. It is rather because it is actual that it has to be acknowledged. For this reason, that certain products are the *Existenzbedingung* of another form of activity goes to show the unviability of an atomistic conception of human activity. For example, the hammer made at a forgery is an essential precondition of the activity of the carpenter. This is, perhaps, too simplistic of a way to apprehend what was, for Marx, morally unacceptable about the idea of a Robinson Crusoe. But, it does bring into view that the *Robinsonades* he spoke of could not purchase the self-reliance of individuals at the cost of a humanity *in abstracto*.[58] I do not mean to say that the *unviability* of such an atomism implies the impossibility of discriminating between activities; I cannot conceive of such a form of monism. I merely wish to say that our prevalent thought concerning *dependence* does not survive *in abstracto*. What I take from Marx is the teaching that the individuals in these *Robinsonades* evade their dependence on human history; they are, and perhaps could only conceivably be, at its very beginning.

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[57] *Das Kapital*, p.185.
[58] *Grundrisse*, p. 94.

A philosophy of economy builds on elements pertaining to a philosophy of action. And Marx, with his notions of *erhalten* and *verwirklichen,* attempts to construct a qualification of the wealth of human economic reproduction – a thought that pertains to a philosophical anthropology. The way in which raw materials become products, and products stay within the confinements of human activities as conditions of the existence of further laboring, reveals an entire *form of life* (and the *Capital* is an interpretation of that form of life).

Now, a picture of this *form of life* comes into view: *value received from nature, maintained and increased through work. The human creative power starts from nature and generates conditions for the sustainment of activities*.

A hammer is produced out of wood and steel, so we can further produce a house. We find *within the world* the vitality of a rational practical principle. Anscombe imagined a sentence or a house emerging out of nowhere. Of course, our recognition of these products as such is beyond any doubt. *The visible likeness to what we produce*[59] would provide enough material for our recognition. Like a mirror, these products reflect back to us a concept of human action.

In this passage, Anscombe is interested in *descriptions of something that goes on in the world,*[60] or, descriptions that exhibit a dependence upon the concept of human action. But our recognition of these products is more substantial than this. We may ask, if such a house arose, and was not build by anyone, what kind of house would it be? And if a sentence of this kind appeared, what would it say? Our dealings with products like this are not exhausted by their production. They usually stay close to us, confined within what we need to do at a given time in history. Does the spontaneous house exhibit an architectonic style? Does its architecture exhibit a function; is it a temple or a hunting cabin? Such a house would have to arise spontaneously within human history, within the history of architecture. Are these products independent from human history? If they are, after all they were not made by any of us, could they maintain the visible likeness Anscombe takes for granted? Of course, all of this is absurd. There can be no such evasion from history. The likeness we speak of here only has a sense as long as we can understand likeness *as* production, and production, in turn, as exhibiting the form of dependence we have been interpreting.

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[59] *Intention,* p. 84.
[60] *Intention,* p. 84.

47. We have considered those things we depend on, thing we need, things we make, things we find and transform within the world. But we also find within the world things we wish to push away from us. These are, namely, things we wish to avoid, such as things that pose a threat. These may be natural things or things we produce, etc.

For example, the judgment *'b is poisonous'* when deployed in the context of picking mushrooms guides an activity. But the guidance it offers is restrictive – one progresses through a selection, and leaves out what is unwanted. You may selectively apply a number of different criteria: size, color or growth. But to capture one's action in a description would, in this case, be equivalent to making sense of the criteria of selection that has its grounds on the avoidance of an effect on the picker's health. Ultimately, the description would embody the reflexive conception of how one wants to preserve one's health, or of the active avoidance of a threat to one's health. This sets this criterion apart in rank. In application, it may assume the character of one more criterion amongst others – size, form, etc. – but its sense demands an enlarged conception.

That which is eatable

48. Of course, the class *that which is eatable* contains more than just mushrooms. There is an essential connection between action and individual reproductions (which is the only way I can make sense of Marx's notion that we produce our bodies). And, in this sense, the poisonous mushrooms are not excluded on the same grounds as the mushrooms that are, for example, too small or too high up on a tree trunk. These are excluded as a *threat*. The consumption of a poisonous mushroom is the perversion of an act of nutrition if it is done in ignorance. It is the perversion of a self-directed act, an act that, as nutrition, is an expression of reproducing the intactness of a person; this is not an act of aggression, as is the intentional intake of poison or, as we shall see, the homicidal act of being poisoned. The consumption of a poisonous mushroom, the perverted act of nutrition, turns the tables on us. We can potentially understand it as a *threat* that lies in our dependence. And, I do not say that this is the only threat; it might even be a minor threat, all things considered. But I choose it as an example because it narrows down the idea that there *is* a threat in what is *an other* upon which I, nevertheless, depend (if I am still

permitted to use the Hegelian idiom). Now, my knowledge of that which I depend on – my ability to apply the predicate *'b is poisonous'* – assumes the urgency of preservation, namely, the urgent preservation of my vitality. And this sort of application, or this sort of knowledge, *is* knowledge in the service of avoidance, which I believe is a species of *practical knowledge*.

But objects of avoidance may also be products, places, and others. One may avoid the smog and a city because of the smog or because of the excess of people. In the case of trash (as a product of something further we do), we have organized a practice that keeps it away from us. The trash pick up system removes our own *debris*, and it does so as an act of preservation or as an act of self-preservation. And now, those things that are avoidable, the interpretation of the concept of *debris,* splits up. It is not the case that every effect of this kind can be avoided, nor is it the case that all that can be driven away from us and kept away at distance (e.g. smog) will not have a permanent effect on the world and us. When you describe the trash pick-up, you conceive of the sense in which your trash is driven away from your surroundings. And the trash pick-up is not an isolated action; it is an organized practice, and as such it implies considerations that fall under what we called stability. The stability of an act of self-preservation exhibits a form of dependence on other persons; it relies on the recognition that our *debris* has to be kept away from us, that some products have to be strictly kept outside the confinements of our reproduction, as they almost wholly exist in stark contrast with individual commodities. In this way, the relation between objects of avoidance and us is measured by the success of their exclusion, as are the activities responsible for this successful exclusion: your drive the trash away and you build a fence to keep wolves out.

An interpretation of the possessive in: "Thus there are many descriptions of happenings which are directly dependent on our possessing the form of descriptions of intentional actions"

49. But what exactly can *dependence* and *form* mean in Anscombe's formula? The notion that we *do* possess the form of descriptions of intentional action can, perhaps, simply mean the same as we *do* posses the form of our bodies. By this I mean to say if we were to be asked to imagine how it is to have two bodies, as Wittgenstein often does, we would find it quite impossible to give any plausible description of a double-bodied experience. By the same token, it would be difficult, I suppose, to give an account of double-bodied intentions. (In fact, I cannot even say if we could express intention as we commonly do under these conditions. And so, I believe that we have already said something about dependence; dependence, in this case, is *dependence* on the sort of reflexive apprehension we have been describing so far.) But let us address a concrete example of such a description:

> Why do we say that the movement of the pump handle up and down is part of a process whereby those people cease to move about? It is part of a causal chain which ends with that household's getting poisoned. But then so is some turn of a wheel of a train by which one of the inhabitant traveled to the house. Why has the movement of the pump handle a more important position than a turn of that wheel? It is because it plays a part in the way a certain poisonous substance gets into human organisms, and that a poisonous substance gets into human organisms is the form of description of what happens which here interests us.[61]

The relevancy function that operates in this description restricts the intelligibility of the event to *what happens*. This is, specifically, the involvement of the pump is obvious and so is the involvement of the poison as a substance of avoidance. But we clearly discern that poisoning is in no way dependent upon the existence of pumps and pump handles. Although in the example, we undeniably see that the connection between pumping and poisoning is strict: pumping that water *is*

[61] *Intention,* p. 84.

poisoning, even if this poisoning fails. And, as a method of poisoning, replenishing the house's water supply is, I suppose, quite efficient.

To be poisoned is an act of consumption. In the poisoner's plan, the poisoner shows knowledge of this act of consumption. And the sense of consumption we are interested in is the unavoidable act of the consumption of water, but not of the poison, of course. Just imagine the following exclamation about the efficiency of this plan: "Sooner or later they will use water!" There are multiple uses for water, and no conceivable household exists without it. – The exclamation by the perpetrator is an insight into an entire net of descriptions. The plan is, in fact, ingenious: it turns a vital necessity into harm.

In our description, we consider the poison and the wheel of the pump together in a non-accidental nexus simply because we are considering what the poisoner is doing. For this reason, the consideration of a recessive causal link, as Anscombe puts it, is inessential to our explanation. Its recessive character renders the action we are considering utterly intractable through the dissipation of our interest; it pushes us further away from our actual starting point and eventually we end up outside the sphere of relevancy that unites the various acts conducive to poisoning. But our description of the operation of the pump pertains directly, *as a means*, to the act under consideration. There is no pumping without pumps, no poisonings without organisms suggestible to poison, no poisoning with water without a bucket (or similar recipient) and drinkers, and finally no poisoning without evil. This is a distinct sort of chain; this chain represents an insider's perspective, if you will. But what exactly defines this perspective? Anscombe appeals to *interest*, but the interest is in the crime, in the means-to-end reasoning of the perpetrator; the rest (i.e., the workings of pumps, the effects of poison etc.) was absorbed by our description as a tacit, perhaps even unnoticed, appeal to our familiarity with the world. And therefore the sense of interest we are discerning is not the sense of interest we have in ghost stories. This is not interest, even as a matter of practicality, say for a detective, regarding *what happened*. When we depend on the possession of a form of description of intentional actions, we depend on a world and someone reasoning practically about this world; in the end, this is a reflection of our possession of a reflexive *Wirklichkeit*.

The limit to the dispersion of descriptions of action

50. The possession of a form of description singles out a class of descriptions, which are sense dependent upon our reflexive knowledge. We now find ourselves with a *strict* notion of dependence to be reckoned with, since there are many descriptions that would be impossible if there was no human activity at all. In light of this, Anscombe's examples of descriptions that do exhibit this strict dependence are things like 'going into reverse,' which can apply to a driver for instance, and depends on the existence of engines, amongst many other things. But there are, of course, descriptions that lie outside a notion of strict dependency. To say this does not mean that these descriptions have to be puzzling. For example, when we consider the expression "sliding on ice," we wonder what thing it is that is doing the sliding. And if we are able to answer this question, and I can imagine many cases where we are able to do so, we may even be able to discern some of the thing's dependence, even if only up to a certain limit. Whatever category of movement this thing pertains to, whatever form it exhibits, will be describable. But, of course, it will not be dependent on our possession of a form of intentional action; if it is a cardboard box that is sliding on the ice, there might be many predictions about how long it will slide for i.e. given its weight…. Nevertheless, these predictions will be very distinct in kind, that is, from predictions about my sliding if I am an ice skater.

Anscombe seems to be referring to a type of *exclusivity* in her examples. This is expressed through the possession of this *form* that resists dispersion, or, that there is no conceivable blindness to the possession of this form, even if this does not exclude that this form is misappropriated. Although lots of things may slide on ice, only we *skate* on it. Only we make contracts, telephone someone, offend others, etc.[62] And even if all of these are perverted by compulsion, their meaning will not disperse –it would simply amount to the apprehension of a form of pathology. If I slide on ice after a fish, I do not become closer to the penguin that does the same, even if the penguin and I are both fishing, I suppose. And my compulsive skating is not comparable to the fly that flies towards a shining light, even if, in both cases, this might be a harmful thing for us to do, respectively.

[62] *Intention,* p. 85.

On the epistemological relevance of our sense of familiarity

51. At this moment of the discussion, Anscombe returns to her targeted notion of an *extra feature*. And we understand she is going in the opposite direction: instead of isolating an item in a taxonomy of mental operations, she recovers the practical context in which actions occur. For example *putting up an advertisement upside down,* as she puts it, involves advertisements and also advertising agencies, all of which go to enlarge our descriptions of intentional actions (or, in Anscombe's example, of an unintentional advertising mistake). And, of course, the value of the mistake, let alone its sole possibility, resides in this particular practical context – the world of advertisements.

The underlying assumption here is one about agency; the reified form of explanation generates a *sealed off* conception of agency. It is sealed off *in* the mental, we might say, and perhaps discounts the importance of how the description of an intentional action demands a wider context. This is to essentially discount the notion that what practical reason *understands* is at a distance – it is right over here, or right over there, in the same place one is doing something. But the wider context, the enlarged description, as Anscombe adds, also has an application to things such as cats (as it pretty much applies to anything with *describable effects*).[63] Of course, the intentionality in the movements of the cat when stalking the bird allows for an enlarged description. And what the cat does is grounded in the sort of animality I know that also has application to me; intuitively, *how* the cat does what he does is *closer* to what I do than the enlarged description of the epigenetic development of an embryo (by this I mean such things as, the involvement of his perception, the careful consideration of his movements in order to avoid making noise and so on, all of these pertain to what the cat is doing). But, I still do not know what the animality of the hunting cat means to *him*. I can vicariously experience the dive of the cliff diver, although I am far from being one, and very far from knowing the life of a cliff diver; but I can't live, not even vicariously, the life of a hunting cat.

Wittgenstein once suggested that whatever the term of comparison supporting the conclusion that, unlike us, animals do not use language, we could instead simply

[63] *Intention*, §47.

assert that they *do not*. We can say this because language is not something they lack, but simply something that does not pertain to their form. What Wittgenstein thought worth discussing instead was the following insight – eating or walking, commanding, questioning, and storytelling were just as part of our natural history as language.[64] Of course, this is a triviality. But the variety in Wittgenstein's list, which serves as a starting point for our explanation, is not simple to grasp. After all, for a certain type of explanation, the difference between intentionally eating a doughnut and intentionally buying a car would hardly be relevant, as long as it *is* intentional. This sort expressive economy dispenses with the resources that pertain to a representative totality of agency – this is a totality the present argument has been trying to gain back. I believe that the absence of such a totality, the absence of *familiarity*, is bound to make the agential mind feel rather displaced. But shouldn't we avoid this prejudicial subservience to theory? And if we do, does not this sort of familiarity emerge naturally? Just imagine, instead of someone doing something quite incidentally, someone learning how to play an instrument.

The point of Wittgenstein's list, the forerunner of Anscombe's list, resides in the gain for philosophy – for the philosopher who accompanies the thoughts being laid in front of him in that very book – namely, a sense of history that precludes Wittgenstein from giving in into the putative demands of autonomy by any theory. In this list, agency appears as *our* history. There is, of course, a discernable difference between eating and commanding, the former pertaining to individual consumption, the latter to the possibility of mediation. But as part of the *same* history, both these forms of activity represent the condition of reproduction of the beings responsible for that very natural history. This makes the possession of certain *forms of description* depend on one's existence within time.

52. Here is a description of the concept of reproduction by Marx:

> The constant reproduction of the basis of the existing order and its fundamental relations assumes a regulated and orderly form in the course of time. And such regulations and order are themselves indispensable elements of any mode of production, if it is to assume social stability and indifference from mere chance and arbitrariness. These are precisely the form of its social stability and therefore its relative freedom from arbitrariness and mere chance.[65]

[64] *Philosophical Investigations,* §25.
[65] *Capital,* volume III, p. 929.

History is more present in Marx's thought than it is Wittgenstein's list, but Wittgenstein's conception of natural history could hardly ignore the human capacity of self-addressing the detail of the reproduction of a particular order. And the reproduction of an order – the reproduction of a definite *form of activity*, a definite mode of life, as Marx and Engels put it in the *German Ideology*[66] – are not only the reproduction of its stability, but also of some of its enduring effects; This is, for Marx , most certainly, the reproduction of violence and injustice, for Wittgenstein it is the reproduction of a disease that plagues proper thinking. And these enduring effects, these side effects, are just as much a matter of inheritance as is the stability, or lack thereof, of a mode of production. We can see this in the following: we inherit a language, and also, we learn from others how things are done and have been done long before us. So, as Marx and Engels tell us, "as individuals express their life, so they are" the recovery of this sort of familiarity, the recovery of ordinary language for philosophy, for example (or of ordinary practical contexts of an action in the philosophy of mind, or of moral persons to an economic scheme), is not the recovery of a sort of unquestioned familiarity, and it is not a form of familiarity that is unable to reveal something to us about ourselves. Indeed, Wittgenstein is right: *we are supplying observations pertaining to the natural history of human beings; not curiosities, nor observations anyone has ever doubted, but merely observations that have escaped remark, perhaps because these are always before our eyes*.[67]

53. We thus shift our attention away from an *extra feature* to a totality: if you look out of your window, you see people walking, running, waiting for the bus, buying a bus ticket, and so on. This is what you *see*, not something as unspecified as *people acting intentionally* (although, of course, they are). You never wonder about your surroundings, although you wonder about something that breaks with the ordinary. (This is because not all of this, not all of that which surrounds you, is happening for the first time.) You may, of course, never forget the first time you saw a possession, although you cannot recall the first time you saw someone walking, or even the first time you saw a cat jumping; and still, you may very well have a vivid memory of the first time you saw a giraffe walking. But I cannot remember the first

[66] *The German Ideology,* p. 37.
[67] *Philosophical Investigations,* §415.

time I saw someone buying something, nor catching the bus, nor picking apricots and by this I do not mean to imply that I always knew all there is to know about these things.

Suppose that everything was happening for the first time. Could I, myself, act? This is a terrifying image: all the potentialities are still in me, but could I do anything at all? Would I be able to actualize my potentialities? The people outside of my window would not be given to me as others. And now there is no one at all to teach me anything, when I know from my perspective here and now that I *did* learn a lot from others. In the world of the *Gedankenexperiment*, continuity, as such, as human history, has vanished, and with it the difference between being an adult and an infant. With the loss of history came the loss of reasonableness, the loss of difference in age and experience. And so, in this world, everyone young and old, might simply drag himself across the floor towards something he wishes to eat –Hunger is always *hunger*; it always was, and sooner or later I might even be able to get up on my feet and walk towards the food I crave for. But I always *knew* the difference between the hunger that is satisfied by cooked meat, using fork and knife, as Marx said, and the hunger that devours raw meat using only teeth.[68] I was never, and could never be, a Robinson Crusoe; and I am and could only be, in this particular sense, a product of that very natural history Wittgenstein spoke of. I inherited all of this, forks and knifes, in the same way I inherited philosophy. And I inherited all of these things in the exact same way St. Augustine received the *perennial* question concerning the philosophy of language from his parents, from being taught how to talk.

My *form of life*, the natural history to which I belong, was passed down to me as another son of Adam, by those who went through the troubles of making this history and who went to the troubles of teaching me about it. And so I inherited my familiarity with the world, within which I learned to know others *as* buyers, sellers, carpenters, bass-players, and married men and women. And these are all things we do, things that have been done before us, and things that will be done after us. As Anscombe puts it, these are all descriptions of *executed* intentions.

[68] *Grundrisse*, p. 92.

A Consideration of the notion of stability – the relation between knowledge and action

54. The possession of the form of executed intentions implies, in the most common case, a world and a body for which these are the case. It implies the knowledge that our intentions are effective actions, although we often fail to do what we mean to. Anscombe's *'I do what happens'* introduces, therefore, a nexus between practical knowledge and the effective action it knows. But the consideration of this nexus runs into familiar difficulties as soon as we consider the possible discrepancy between knowing one's intentions, prospectively, and knowledge of what has in fact happened. We must observe the essential connection between activity and stability. Could the concept of human intentional action maintain its sense if no intentional action had ever made a contribution to this stability? This offers a starting point for our investigation: the power to act is not an altogether ineffective power, but it is suggestible to failure – these considerations amount to an appreciation of our own fallibility.

The concept of effect itself requires consideration. The sense of effect we are interested in harbors a dependence upon practical knowledge; as Aquinas puts it, not just any effect will do. Not even just any effect resulting from my action will do, but only the effect produced by *my* intentional action (not just any unintentional consequence). And we may add that in certain cases, very common cases at that where quality matters, not just any stew will do, not just any painting will do, not just any old way of playing the song "Wouldn't it be Nice" will do. And so, we could finally say that not just anything can count, even if a lot of what I did not expect turns out to be useful, or even good, in some way. Aquinas, when he says "not just any effect will do," is addressing the connection between effects and *indifference*. This thought pertains to a theory of agency as it does to moral thinking. But let us begin with the isolation of a species of knowledge, specifically, *knowledge of intention*, or *knowledge without observation*.

55. First, let us address some initial points in a consideration of the terminology of *Intention*. The notion of *knowledge without observation* cannot stand if it is to imply such infelicitous expressions as Anscombe's rendering of *observation* as something that has the function of an *aid* in the performance of an intentional

action.[69] This is something, I think, we are now prepared to reject. The epistemological importance of the concept of familiarity resides precisely in its ability to equip us with the capability to recognize the importance of a totality of concepts, which pertain to the representation of stable human actions. The picture Anscombe puts forward at this moment of her text works as an abstraction from this totality. Consider the following thought: my eyes are, in a familiar sense as much of an aid as a guitar player's fingers are for him when he plays "Smoke on the Water." These are, in fact, not *aids* to an action at all, but are, as in McDowell's phrase, the "familiarity with the possibilities for bodily acting" that come with being a "competent bodily agent"![70] Anscombe is, of course, aware that this way of talking ends with what she herself terms a *mad account*. This is, namely, that there are two objects known: my intention and the result. And, nevertheless, there is still a point that pertains to the possibility of prospectively *expressing an intention verbally*, and I will address this shortly. For now, I think we ought to focus on Anscombe's realization that such a *mad account* would leave the concept of *willing in a vacuum*. But the possibility of dissociation between what was intended and what really happened is a practical problem that is hardly surprising to anyone who has ever tried to do anything, and did so with varying degrees of success. We only have to appreciate the relevance of this thought to the species of knowledge we call *knowledge of intention*.

Notice that the qualification of an intention as an attempt, as trying to do something, is not practically irrelevant when you consider entertaining an intention with respect to habit. Imagine you are sitting on a bike for the first time. You say "All right, I am going to try this!" Contrast this to "I will just ride my bike to the store; I will be right back with the bread you want." The latter expression presupposes that I now know how to sustain balance on a bike, that I know where the store is, that I know that I can make it back by dinner time (provided there are no pedestrians to delay me, although that is not something I will bring about). Our conception of *knowledge of intention* cannot abstract from this difference. And *this* difference, the difference between doing something for the first time and a habit, relies on the performance of an action – i.e. it relies on the relevant knowledge of my *balance* in action, on my having ridden a bike before. Is my balance an aid to having that very intention? Is the bike, in either case, an aid to having that intention? Imagine that I

[69] *Intention,* p. 53.
[70] 'Anscombe on Bodily Self-Knowledge' in *Essays on Anscombe's Intention,* p. 142.

bring about, in myself, the intention to draw a perfect circle; shortly thereafter, I inform my friend about such an intention. Now, my friend asks me "Ok, but have you ever drawn one before or is this something you are going to try out?" Can I know my intention to draw a perfect circle without knowing the answer to this question? Furthermore, how am I going to draw this circle – with a pen, a pencil, on paper, on the wall? And, why do I intend to do so? But say I try to deny the importance of all such questions; do I still know an intention? I am trying to draw a perfect circle right now, and I cannot seriously say I even have an intention to draw one. This is not only because I have never done so, but also because it seems utterly pointless to me. And this does not impugn the fact that I once seriously entertained the intention to reach the end of my street while riding my bike, even though I had never done so. But back then, the bike was not just an aid. So, there is a false simplicity in the *two objects of knowledge* approach – *the agential mind does not have the capacity to declare its independence from its physical presence within the world*.

56. The autonomy of a *yet to be realized* intention, of something I am, absolutely, about to do, that I know would explain whatever it is I am about to do, is a possibility of theory, a provisory segment of a body of knowledge. But it is, concerning an actual agent (an agent with an actual life), and if it was to remain forever unrealized, nothing but the *unhappy consciousness*. Hegel talked about someone locked in his own head, perhaps afraid to fail; the poet who intended to write a good poem and never did, the poet that ended up promoting the sphere of his mind to full autonomy, perhaps out of sadness. The dignity of this thought demands a consideration that pertains to the importance of *failure* in human life, and I shall for now stall it until section B.

Anscombe does ask the question: "What can opening the window be except making such and such movements with such and such a result?"[71] And we may, as she also does, dispel the putative reductive thought that makes knowledge of intention into the knowledge of my body's movements, thereby pushing it back further and further. But what we know about our intention is something *at a distance from me*, or as I said earlier *over there*, where the window is (such as the window in my room that I want open so some fresh air will come in [an enlarged description]). Now, how

[71] *Intention,* p. 51.

could the window be an aid to my opening the window? And when I feel the fresh air on my skin, am I, by means of an aid (my skin in this case), *verifying* that the window is open?

Wittgenstein asks: can I claim to have observed that I, as well as others, can walk around without bumping into things when I have my eyes open, but not when my eyes are closed. The reply must surely be: yes. We can easily say that we have observed this. But it does seem to become somewhat redundant the minute we claim to inform someone of this, to claim that this has been a discovery we have made. It seems that the grammar of *informing someone* is out of place here. I take Wittgenstein to be saying that, perhaps, this would not be the first example of what *giving a piece of information* is. Perhaps you would instead choose something like: to microwave garlic for twenty seconds makes it easier to peel. You assume that the stability of your action will rely on your eyes as it has always been like this; but what would it mean if it were not like this?

Is this knowledge derived from the observations the person in the example claims to have made? What does this supposition even mean, this idea that knowing such a thing relies upon observation? A blind man can claim: "You can walk anywhere without bumping into stuff, I can't." – He has never seen a busy train station, and I do not believe that he considers his intentions to walk somewhere as lacking an aid (even if it is a very important aid). For him, blindness was always there (this is in the same sense as it is for someone who has asthma, where he cannot just do any kind of physical exercise without preparation.) The self-apprehension of a privation was there, as it has always been, *right from the start*.

And would this idea even be available to the blind man if he did not have any practical consideration of the effects of his actions – of effectively walking wherever, more than once? Would it be available to him if he did not have any considerations that pertained to the stability and interest of what he usually does?

57. Stability in the face of a privation. This is surely an understandable idea and a perfectly common concern for someone who has been deprived of one of his senses. The characteristic behavior, which results from deprivation is perfectly observable.

Is deprivation not itself part of what is understood practically? I think when we appreciate this question, we realize the problem of an account that works

additively along the lines of: there is knowledge of an intention and, perhaps, of one's bodily movements, and what one sees is happening, in the sense of verification. But observational knowledge is not something added to an account. We very often proceed circumspectly, especially in face of a hard task or an unfamiliar task. And we do *use* observation in order to look at what we are doing – we pay attention, mind the details, notice resistances from whatever it is we are working on. If I became invisible, and therefore invisible to my own perception, how could I see if am using the correct fingering on my guitar? Perhaps I could figure it out from the depressed strings and the feelings on my fingertips. But I can, very easily, imagine this getting far too complicated. And now, all I would like to do is to look at my fingers; it would be a relief to be able to do so. But is this verification? Is this not simply *learning how to play the guitar*? Perhaps this can indeed be called verification, someone might insist, but then when your hearing verifies that you know how to play a certain song.

It is odd, I believe, to suppose that the invention of braille resulted from the fact that verification by aid of vision was not possible for some humans. It seems rather that it was a matter of practicality, and by this I mean of allowing for circumspection. So that one could, as one does, read the previous sentence again, study a book, write down one's thoughts and be able to read them later on, or have others discuss one's ideas. If all of this amounts to verification, then so be it! But now verification is not something that occurs simply *ex post facto;* it is not as if, such as in the example from *Intention*, I would first write with my eyes closed and *then* check if it was correct – this does, manifestly so, sound more like a children's game than actual writing (and this might even make for an interesting game). So, circumspection is but the familiar way of acting someone has who is not indifferent to what he is doing. The blind man in Wittgenstein's example is capable of expressing the demands of his circumspection, which is to say that he is capable of addressing his privation. For him, this is something that has been there since the beginning, and for this reason it pertains to the content of whatever he *intends* to do.

Let us now appreciate another idea: how can observation be absent and how does this not overthrow the nexus between knowledge of intention and knowledge of an effective action? How can we address the *without observation* idiom without alienating agents from their personal bodily capacities?

The argument about performance mistakes

58. There are many mistakes that overthrow the nexus between intention and an effective action. Let us consider Anscombe's suggestion that a performance mistake implies no fault in reasoning. Her interest in performance mistakes aims at keeping intact, as much as possible, the intuition that practical reasoning is working correctly. Now, however, something threatens its effect: an action is in the process of the agents reasoning about it, and the person in question went through the necessary permutations. But this is the very same action that could be interrupted. In the case we are taking into consideration, the action *is* interrupted, by a mistake, no less. If I want to put shampoo in my hair, and accidentally grab the soap container (these are confusingly similar bottles), I would, if asked about it, say I was putting shampoo on my head (to the perplexity of my interlocutor, I imagine). If someone interrupted me, that person would be interrupting my putting *soap* on my head. Except, I ended up not really putting soap on my head (something relevant for my own doing). And even if now I do correct this mistake, my previous reasoning remains intact; we will want to say: "it was just the wrong container, shampoo is what you use to wash your hair." This does not suggest a separation between reasoning and acting, a conception that would survive only at the expanse of the notion of stability. It suggests rather that the experience of a *dissociation* an agent has is indeed possible. This sort of dissociation happens in many guises, and we may, together with Anscombe, say that the mistake is in the performance; and it is. But unless I do not care at all about if I do, and what I want to do, this sort of dissociation cannot be the common case. I mean, what would I be reasoning for?

The interruption prevented me from making the shampoo mistake, and this interruption is different from if I were to pause or from my own confusion. For example, all of a sudden I do not know if I have to turn left or right at an intersection and I slow the car down or even stop completely. The same thing happens when I lose my train of thought while cooking and I have to ask myself "what do I have to do next?" I stop because my practical knowledge is incomplete. But I may also catch my own faulty reasoning. Suppose the following remarks are uttered by someone who is working: "No, it can't be this one, it's that piece over there," "I just realized I have used the wrong cable" and so on. This class of cases exhibits mistakes that are undone by correction, which is a sort of *catching myself* in the moment of producing the mistake through reasoning (faulty reasoning). But we immediately discern a

difference: these are exclamation *about reasoning mistakes*, they are wrong calculations about what was indispensable for the completion of a given task.

Performance mistakes represent a class of cases where the overthrowing of practical knowledge is effected not by lack of reasoning. These exhibit a distinct problematic and Anscombe casts some suspicion on the sort of knowledge we are considering, on what kind of stability, if any, the practical knowledge at work in performance mistakes has; she calls it *a funny sort of knowledge*.[72] But is it not the case that the problematic exhibited here precisely shows that the point cannot be about the production of a funny version of knowledge? Equally, is the problem not one of a deprivation of knowledge (rather than finding a marginal case where we are still allowed to call it knowledge, even though one cannot help but to notice how exotic the case really is)?

We might consider cases such as writing with one's eyes closed.[73] But these considerations would simple override the suggestion that, for any action that is not a philosophical example, considerations pertaining to the stability of the action are indispensable for *knowing* the action: if you really are going to do something like that very often, you might want to consider Braille (for the sake of legibility and to avoid writing accidents, like having ink run out without you noticing it). And so, the argument about performance mistakes could not aim to establish the process of practical reasoning by supposing its truth as independent from what it aims at producing: an effective action. This would merely generate a crippled version of the form of practical thought or, even worse, it would threaten it.

The *knowledge that a man has of his intentions* is not, not for him, a reified item in an epistemology. The practical serviceability of this knowledge, or its proper working, is, for him, the only thing he expects to know, except when he does not know. And yet, we discern a difference between faulty reasoning and performance mistakes. This difference puts forward a conception of agency, which is complex enough to mark the distinction. After all, performance mistakes seem to be closer to our accusations of having a lack of attention than to our inability to understand or do certain things. This throws some light on the notion of agency, especially in its implication for the self-constitution of an individual person.

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[72] *Intention*, p. 82.

[73] A suggestion made by Adrian Haddock, 'The Knowledge That a Man Has of His Intentional Actions' in *Essays on Anscombe's Intention*, p. 168.

Expression of intention is not isomorphic with the intentional action

59. The expression of an intention is not *performative* in the same sense as a sentence that is spoken by a judge in a court. The action of sentencing is exhausted in the linguistic act. But, a verbal expression of intention only offers us the overt expression of an end and not the action. This does not impugn the importance of an expression of intention, since there is a point for it in a language. But I wish to contend that sufficient attention to this form of expression only shows us the necessity to focus on a different matter besides the expression *per se* (although I do not wish to render the contexts for the use these expressions pointless, nor could I). Sure enough, these expressions show the subject as figuring in a future event as an agent, but this leaves matters relative to intentional action untouched. After all, if someone speaks his sentence out loud, this also shows him as participating actively in some future event.

Let us address some of the conditions in which we express our intentions, in which we, as Michael Dummett puts it, *learn* to use sentences in the future.[74]

We can restate the problem as follows: to *sincerely* express the intention of doing x is expressing doing what will be sufficiently conclusive of x. The knowledge, however, does not stop with one sincerely intending to x, as St. Peter reminds us.

Anscombe's *funny sort of knowledge*, that is independent of what it is knowledge *of*, pertains precisely to discounting the *fallibility* that comes with the possession of this species of knowledge (knowledge of an intention I *do* have). And, the knowledge of my intention is, for example, the sort of knowledge I may quote when things go wrong as a way of asserting involuntary participation in any unintended consequences. *"That was not what I intended!"* is a plausible context for an expression of intention: a declaration of intentions. But when things go wrong with what I am doing, and fail to do it, I usual *try it again*. Imagine I wish to write on a whiteboard in a classroom, but as I write nothing appears. There is, *for myself*, a relatively thin value in "I intended to write on the whiteboard, that was my intention, *I know it!*" if nothing else happens. The expression "That was not what I intended, let me do this again, there it is!" might be an answer to the perplexity an interlocutor

[74] *Frege: Philosophy of Language,* p. 350.

poses when he asks "what are you doing?" because he sees that nothing is being written on the board.

So when the agent conceives of himself as making a contribution towards the attainability of his end, – or, in considering, as we shall see later, what Anselm Müller calls the *seriousness* of practical reasoning – the agent gains enough space to discern between an e*xpression of intention* and the intention *in action.* And, it is doubtful he would exaggerate the knowledge of his intention, although this certainly pertains to the moral significance of deliberative contexts where one *knows* what one intends to do. Consider, for example, how my intention to work out a complicated guess (e.g. to guess how many M&M's are inside of a large jar filled with M&M's) is not the same as when the solution strikes me at once. An expressed intention does not have to be *complete* in order to function *in action.* In this case, if the guess does not strike me, I can probably just start trying to work out an answer. And this working it out, say trying various answers, realizing their inconsistency, etc., does not, not at all, have to leave the overtly expressed end untouched; think, for instance, of the accusation "talk is cheap!" as another possible reply to an *expression of intention*.

It is because of the knowledge gained through acting that we might correctly discern between the overt expression of an intention I presently have, and the announcement of what I still intend to do in the light of certain difficulties (certain difficulties that are revealed to me). This is, nevertheless as Dummett reminds us, a condition of having learned to talk in the future, of learning to express truth considering the future: "we could hardly have the concept of intention unless we had the notion of the intention's being carried out or failing to be carried out".[75]

But, the point of an expression of intention (before knowledge gained through acting is in place), is not pointless. For instance, consider another plausible context for such expressions: a child may need to learn how to express things she intends to do, precisely because she does not know how to do these things, or does not have the means: "I want to draw a picture of my cat!" When we respond: "Here are your crayons!" we recognize the expression of an intention *as* a request.

The child's request is a form of *orectic humility*; it is the dissemination of her want as a spontaneous and innate form of reliance. She is requesting, presupposes, or rather, *assumes* as a matter of course, her presence in the near *future*. And, as reliance,

[75] *Frege: Philosophy of Language,* p. 350.

she presupposes that her reaching this near future will not be achieved without the help of another – someone who is expected to answer to her requests, who is worried about her intentions and desires. And there is still, of course, the possibility of the frustration of this expression of intention, perhaps on the account of another, or because of her own self. This can be termed as *Disappointment* with another, or with oneself – and this distinction is fundamental, or shall I say, unavoidable for a moral mind (this is someone who does not accuse someone else falsely, that is, someone who can truly be said to rely on someone else).

4. Our irreducibility and the irreducibility of our actions

The irreducibility of Practical Knowledge

60. Anscombe asks in *Intention*: "Would intentional actions still have the characteristic 'intentional', if there were no such thing as expression of intention for the future, or as further intention in acting."[76] This question pertains to the isolation of what makes an action *intentional*. Let us therefore address this topic in a context introduced by Anscombe: *that intentions may be conveyed as imperatives*. I will impose this context on a Wittgensteinian form.

Anscombe warns us about the assumption that commanding someone, as a species of *making someone act intentionally*, exhibits a false simplicity if merely conceived under the guise of *usefulness*; this is a warning I wish to take very seriously in what follows. And furthermore, I ought to add this proviso: I am not interested in commands, orders, and requests because these are final criteria of what an intentional action *is*, but rather because these are a feature of intentional actions. This is a feature of at least some of them (e.g. that we can command and so forth), which is, obviously, more faithful to the spirit of Anscombe's text.

In this regard, Anscombe tells us: "Don't say 'But the distinction relates to an obviously *useful* feature of certain actions, namely that one can get a person to perform them by commanding him'; for 'usefulness' is not a concept we can suppose retained if we have done away with 'purpose'."[77] Wittgenstein's *builders* are an expression of this very problem.[78] The continued activity they share is *intentionally* structured; it is a set of connected performances where they address each other in the context of building. This addressing implies the suggestibility of *B* to *A*'s orders; or, *A* exploits *B*'s capacity to *execute* the descriptions of his commands. Since the activity of the builders extends temporarily, *A* might at this stage be assuming the capacity of *B* to share with him more than just the rudimentary description mentioning an intentional dependent concept and a physical object – that is, the difference between

[76] *Intention,* §20.
[77] *Intention,* §20.
[78] *Philosophical Investigations,* §2.

"bring that slab!" and "bring that slab!... so we can build the house." And I believe we are licensed to make this assumption, given that it was asked of us to conceive of this activity as the activity of an entire tribe, which can, of course, not have a merely *instantaneous existence*.

We have enough here to discern the sense of command that interests us. The point can be put in this way: the description of a command will not have the form of an arbitrary suggestion of an executable movement. Of course, we can command people to move their limbs without giving them any reason to do so. But nothing like that is implied in the case of the builders (perhaps in a gymnastics class, we would be closer to something arbitrary, or independent of something that is *further done*, although I am not entirely certain of this).

For *B*, let's call him the servant, there is a difference between the answer "because you told me so," *simpliciter*, and "so we can continue building the house," assuming, as we are, that he belongs to a tribe. For example, *A* tells *B* to bring the slab, but he might not tell *B* specifically the path he should take to bring it, and he certainly cannot foresee the difficulties that *B* might encounter. Is *A*'s description therefore incomplete or even unsuccessful as a command? The answer, I believe, is no. A command allows for a more or less complete description of its execution, but this difference might be something to be completed by the executor of the order. What this completion amounts to can be put this way: Imagine *A* asks *B* the following question: "What took you so long?" And now suppose *B* replies something like: "The slab was stuck in the mud, therefore I had to do such and such." Even if *such and such* was not suggested by *A*, it counts as a contribution to *B*'s execution of the command – *practical knowledge is irreducible* even in cases where the agent is the mediator for an end of another. It is constitutive of his contribution to the bringing about of the end *in* action.

What is noteworthy about this aspect is the fact that we find here the concept of a *performance*. This concept represents one division of *intentional action*. Performances are significant *exercises*. A conclusion is implied with performances; in this case, the conclusion is the building.

Here we find the following contrast: *A is x-ing only if A has not just yet x-ed*. Performances can form imperatives because they are expressive of something to be

executed in the future.[79] When an agent acts to conclude his performance, the conclusion will bring with it a stop to the performance, which makes it possible for the agent to start a new performance if necessary.

Let us conclude this train of thought: That which brings a performance to a conclusion is at a *distance*, and is not yet here for the agent. In this *interval*, the agent realizes the significance of his acting; he realizes the striving is constitutive of what can come to count as practical knowledge, which pertains to him as an agent. What exactly pertains to him as practical knowledge is not given to him by the order to be executed, but *in* executing the order – it is in his performance.

On Mediation

61. A distinct kind of necessity emerges from within the narrow scope of the operations performed by the builders. This particular language (again, we are asked to imagine this language as the whole language of a tribe)[80] has, at its core, the actions: requesting and addressing. All requests, and all obedience, depend on the reciprocal structure formed actively by both *A* and *B*. Of course, we are also told about distinct objects, and these are objects necessary to build something, objects necessarily conducive to the attainment of the conclusion of their activity, slabs, etc.

When *A* requests certain objects, this turns *B* into the mediator of *A*'s intentions. In this *language game,* he exhibits the capacity to vouch for an end given to him by another. The end, in the case of the builders, implies the interaction with some necessary objects. And these objects make specific demands upon the agent

[79] *Action, Emotion and Will,* p. 175.

[80] This idea is not without its own difficulties. In one sense, it seems to be asked of us to make an effort in abstraction in order to consider only a small section of a language – a language game. This would be connected with the contrast between a *system of communication* described by St. Augustine and *everything we call a language*. But we can think of it as the presentation of the core of a language, not as a mere abstraction in the sense that we might have abstracted another aspect of language in order to scrutinize it (we might be studying some other, any other, language game). To think of this paragraph (§2) in this second reading would imply conceiving of it as illuminating the idea of language game by providing the definite actions that structure language games. For example, the builders would figure in the definition of *language game* the determination of distinct actions: asking for something – obeying the request. This would be important when we consider languages conceiving of languages as being inherently social and not merely individually expressive. The complete elucidation of this last thought is beyond the scope of the present work; the idea of the constitutive character of these actions, however, is not.

who is ordered to bring them. Now, the particularity of the action, the specificity of the objects with their own demands, pertains to the *execution capacity* of the mediator and not to that of the commander. Of course, acts of mediation do not have to imply transitivity in this exact way. We have to preserve the possibility of two agents sharing an end, which is only attainable for one of them and not equally attainable for both; or, to make a stronger point, it could only be achieved by one of them. When a trainer trains an athlete to beat a world record, they share an end without sharing the equal possibility of its attainment. As a matter of fact, this end implies a sense of *uniqueness*; this is something that pertains, as a value concept, only to human action – it presupposes human action as a measure, or as individual achievement and, therefore, finally *as* human history; under this concept, we consider the fact an individual human action can be seen as a breakthrough that is significant for the entire species.

We consider now an important aspect that is suggested from our example of the builders: the master is requesting the mediated prospective act. He assumes that it is executable, which is to say he assumes its completeness, and this lies outside of his immediate practical control – the contribution of the servant is *practical knowledge*, while the master *knows* his intention. But the master, – I have now unashamedly given Wittgenstein's builders a Hegelian guise – unlike Peter Schlemihl, does not become traceless, he is not without a shadow within the world; and hence he does not separate himself from others in resignation only to return to them when in need. He is within the world, and he casts his shadow onto the world (although, perhaps he is, and I do not mean that builder *A* is, indifferent to this very fact). And I would like to add that Wittgenstein's builders are simply a tribe that illustrates their dependence. We can even say that they illustrate the dependence of their language upon each other. While Hegel saw, in the actuality of mediation, the condition of possibility of a historical institution; in the particular case of the *Phenomenology*, an institution that bares the very origin of inequality, or, the annihilation of reciprocity.

The master is not praying for the act to come about, because praying is different from requesting even if they both concern the future; I am thinking of praying as in *praying for things to happen*:[81] both request, or wish, or humbly ask for

[81] Peter Geach, "Praying for things to happen" in *God and The Soul,* p. 86.

the coming about of a prospective mediated act, but the answerability of the mediator is different in both cases:

In requesting, the mediator changes; in praying, he does not.

62. The change in the mediator comes from his action. And now, the mediator, or the servant, gains the capacity to impede the action because: he refuses or is unable, he is not the automaton, his capacity for work does not exist *in* him as pure potentiality (not *in spite of him*, not in spite of his limit, not even in spite of his body).

A non-generic conception of a power and the irreducibility of practical knowledge

63. Dependence on another *as* an*other* is dependence on the other's work. Of course, just as this stands, it does not tell us anything about the existential aspect of this dependence; this is to say that it does not tell us if this dependence is cooperation or violence. And I mean this remark to entail what Strawson spoke of as a way of appreciating the conceptual scheme that we have at this present stage of the history of the philosophy of mind.[82] Like Strawson, I do not intend to contribute to an *a priori* genetic psychology. Although I read this as entailing, and I do not wish to say that he does, that the aspect of our conceptual scheme in the present history of the philosophy of mind owes its existence to both just and unjust institutions.

So, I wish to consider the possibility of abstracting from practical knowledge, which is the possibility of addressing action as a generic power. And I wish to do so in order to show that what I have termed the irreducibility of a species of knowledge carries with it the irreducibility of persons, namely the irreducibility of those who act. I shall illustrate this idea with recourse to a pair of Marxist concepts: *work* and *work-power*. But I would like to make an addendum with respect to my use of these concepts: I am far more interested here in what kinds of circumstances an abstraction can work in. In other words, I am interested in both the metaphysical conditions of abstraction and their practical reflection in human practices. This is not at all the same as saying that I do not recognize (or that I do not wish to retain) the moral implications behind the employment of this abstraction as wage-work. Some of the

[82] *Individuals: an essay on descriptive metaphysics,* p. 112.

moral implications of this idea shall be addressed by this thesis further on. However, for now, I am interested in how Marx conceptualized an abstraction that had puzzled Aristotle when he asked himself how bricks and mortar could turn into a house. I believe that what puzzled Aristotle, the same thing that puzzled Marx, tends to be a puzzle only for philosophers. I believe this, nevertheless, does not diminish the question's importance. I find that the importance of this question resides in an honest attempt to apprehend our dependence upon each other, which I read as being a question about our *mind*.

64. Marx thought that the distinction between *work* and *work-power* concealed not only an insight about the generation of profit, but also a particular metaphysical problem. The metaphysical difficulty lies precisely in the right sort of quantification of the value of something and, moreover, that value is defined in a potentiality. The idea of value latches onto the generic notion of work-power as a commodity.[83] A qualitative conception of the work done retracts from the abstraction, and this retraction emerges as a critical point in political philosophy. But, for the present purpose, the focus should be on the very *possibility of abstraction*.

For Marx, this distinction had a clear practical consequence, namely, the fact that, in the elaboration of a contract, the actual activity of the worker has to be quantified as a precondition. Therefore, establishing the value of the object called *work-power* precedes its actuality. This necessity is obviously a matter of practicability, but the philosophical point emerges only if we focus on the possibility that the differentiation between the abstraction and the actualized work is palpable. The difference may stand out firstly as the problem of crystallizing the initial value attached to *work-power* as an object. We may suppose that if the proper metaphysical distinction is in place, then there will be sufficient ground to identify the developed *work* as the actual productive force. Therefore we will be able to attach a value to this actual instance of it, rather than to the initial assumed object (in practice, this is often the case, such as in the event of a raise).

Here the critical point, the moral point, returns via the metaphysical illumination. The possibility condition of a structure that generates value does not ignore the value of the concrete *work;* on the contrary, it exploits the proper

[83] *Das Kapital*, p. 497.

demarcation between its value and the postulated abstract object. These considerations serve the purpose of showing a practical approach to the position where reflexive knowledge is applied – the postulated object, *work-power*, contains the differentia; it contains the actuality it abstracts from. Therefore, *work-power*, as it figures in the initial assumption, is developed into a proper, actualized existence through the worker.[84] The proper metaphysical distinction between *work* and *work-power* presupposes the individualized existence of the worker – he who could, in principle, have practical knowledge of his actions – the metaphysical distinction presupposes the concept of agency *as* the actual work.

The individual agent may be outside the scope of the abstracted object, but as soon as we conceive of its actuality in concrete *work*, he becomes, as a worker, answerable to our reciprocal knowing. For instance, in applying his power, the agent or worker, uses up some of his potentiality, a potentiality we know is not inexhaustible. In the abstract form, as a contrast, the work appears as the pure application of a potentiality without any impediments. The conception of an individual agent involves various kinds of impediments to which, as an agent, he is susceptible to; In other words, the agent is susceptible to the various demands on his practical capacities and, I may add, also passively, as the patient of the effects of his action, or the counteracting of the world. The knowledge I am applying in this case is reciprocal. And the deployment of intentional dependent concepts in a prospective mediated context – *work-power* – does not obliterate the application of reciprocal knowledge. But the abstraction may figure as a *provisory* condition in a practical context.

We have now discerned *work-power* as anticipated work.

65. Here is the Wittgensteinian *dictum* addressing the present difficulty: *"A machine as symbolizing its action."* And further, "And it is quite true: the movement of the machine-as-symbol is predetermined in a different sense from that in which the movement of any given actual machine is predetermined."[85] Perhaps the different sense that Wittgenstein speaks of can be paraphrased as the difficulty contained in the generic application of knowledge about intentional dependent concepts and the later

[84] Marx does indeed refer to the personality of the worker. *Das Kapital*, p. 497.
[85] *Philosophical Investigations,* §193.

emergence of an individualized conception – the way in which the generic application *anticipates* the proper non-generic conception.

It is, as Wittgenstein notices, after all, quite true that this distinction has some palpability. He, of course, partially imputes the distinction to a failure of perception on the part of those doing philosophy; and I believe there is a point to this accusation – since, the abstraction may seem to easily lead to a clear-cut idea of the machine, or of its movement *as such*. We would have to struggle, nevertheless, to maintain that the notion of *work-power* leads us to the idea of the worker *as such*, perhaps not even, of work *as such*.

There is, nonetheless, a more important aspect in Wittgenstein's observation: the detachment of the knowledge of the movement of the machine from the knowledge of its mechanical constitution. Now, the point is to avoid an appeal to a form of explanation by reduction, in this case, by mechanical reduction. And by steering clear of this sort of reduction, – remember we are after the *movement* – the discussion focuses instead, firstly, on the queer sense of *possibility* present in the knowledge of the movement of the machine-as-symbol. The sense of possibility contained in our view of the machine-as-symbol does not impinge on our expectation in the same way the possibility in Kant's stone does; it is more like the eye in this respect – the movement of the machine is apprehended within a teleology that is peculiar to it. Its possibility of movement is the possibility of one categorical type of movement and *not* another; what the mechanism allows for is in the diagram of the machine itself. But, what Wittgenstein is pointing out here is that the sense of the possible movement of the machine-as-symbol is already an imposition of a limit on our knowledge. It is in this sense that the knowledge of the movement recognized in the machine-as-symbol does not have to fall short of the difficulties *we know* attach to it (e.g. practical knowledge contains that which impedes it).

The machine-as-symbol is the putative *use* of the machine, abstracting from the obstructions that may befall it (we forget about these or simply do not think about these obstructions in certain circumstances, as Wittgenstein puts it). In a diagram, the machine figures as the intentional principle it embodies; it functions as a counterpart to the physical machine that potentially has defects. And yet, a machine is inconceivable without the latter. The machine-as-symbol, the abstraction, is pure simplicity. And I believe that Wittgenstein is, as we are, drawn to this simplicity. But why is this, as is the difference between work and work-power, a matter for

philosophy? I do not want to suggest that the reason is because it is the business of philosophy to know, or to make explicit, *everything* there is to know; I do not want to pretend I know what *everything* means in this case. To speak plainly, I believe that this sort of thought imposes itself on the philosopher the minute he recognizes a threat in this simplicity.

66. Let us return to the machine. I may certainly recognize a machine without knowing what it does, without recognizing what it is for. But I can only say in a derivative sense that I *know* this machine. (Perhaps we can say: I know it as belonging to a kind, but there is a risk here because it may be just an assemblage of parts without any usage – this assemblage would have not fooled a mechanic with some experience.) In this case, I recognize it, perhaps because the shapes of its parts, but I do not know what it is, and in virtue of this I cannot use it. But there is also the case where I know a machine, I know its use, I know how to use it (i.e. I know what it is, what it does), but I have no clue about *how* it is built – the explanation by reduction is now in perspective.

We can give an approximation of how we deal with such knowledge: this knowledge is manifested in our advertences to what may impede the movement of the machine based on how it *moves*. Prescriptions for these advertences may figure in the owner's manual: (a) In *x-ing*, if M encounters an A, this will block and brake it. (b) In *x-ing*, if M is in condition C it will malfunction. We also know that the machine will suffer alteration with its continued activity; it will get old, and it will get used. We *do* have the need to go beyond the diagram of the machine. We have to possess some considerations pertaining to its actual use such as a warning about its use. The knowledge we apprehend in the diagram becomes insufficient; and so we go beyond the anticipation of the teleology of the machine – we move towards the actual machine.

But the need to go beyond the limit of the machine-as-symbol, as such, does not have to avoid the threat of reification. It may retain it in a more sophisticated variant in the notion of a *process*.[86] This notion appears at the end of the discussion as

[86] *Philosophical Investigations*, §196. Marx discusses the same point. He characterizes the distinction between the process of work and the process of exchange of work as a commodity as separated processes. The latter fails to be contained in the former. This sort of unessentiality of the real process of work should

taking the place of the machine-as-symbol as its *non-inert version* or as a shadow. At this stage, the step the argument takes is precisely an answer to the sort of pressure we are discussing. In the face of maintaining the stability of the knowledge of the machine-as-symbol, we are led to try to accommodate the knowledge we manifest about what might impede it. We can identify this as *an attempt at absorbing back what the anticipation concealed*.

A description of a process that *in principle* might accommodate such facts is different from the description of the machine-as-symbol. But instead of upgrading the abstracted conception, we can come to appreciate the obvious utility of the abstraction in its *provisory* character. The importance does not reside in the possibility of abstraction, but in the non-survival, *within philosophy*, of the actual of movement of abstraction in its *unique* way. This is the correct sense of possibility, or the sense we are after, which is the sense Wittgenstein characterizes as being closer to the actual movement than a picture is of its subject – *the movement as presence.* But this presence, this abstract uniqueness, is not yet the uniqueness of the historical record of the athlete, which might not have been anticipated. Of course, we have moved away from machines to persons, but this is merely because we have *understood* the example.

The movement of abstraction enters philosophy in its unique way: it becomes a shadow of the actual moving, or it becomes the shadow of a movement that has not yet been, but could be; now we have animated the notion of the anticipation. As Wittgenstein puts it: *not just some picture of the movement*, but the picture of *this* movement, or of every possible movement. The meta-philosophical point of Wittgenstein's text now strikes us in a lively manner. The limit of philosophy, and there is one, lies in the capacity to get closer to reality without falling prey to its own descriptive resources, without giving itself the impression that it could anticipate all there will be. The shadow, the machine-as-symbol, the movement as anticipated, the subject as a condition of cognition, the work-power as a commodity are all concepts

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be discussed by noticing that work implies a different kind of exchange from other commodities. Noticing the failure to represent the actuality of one form of exchange is a step towards the elucidation of the abstraction: *the process of exchange*. See *Grundrisse*, p. 274.

that have a logical secondary existence. Of course, there is nothing wrong with their secondary existence, as long as we *know* this form of simplicity. [87]

67. As Strawson has said, the notion of a pure individual consciousness (and we might add, the *pure* individual movement, or the pure individual work), cannot be used as a primary concept in the explanation of *a person*;[88] it might survive in the theological notion of personal immortality, although, I suppose, its survival implies a sort of trap –the pure individual consciousness has but memories of things it can no longer do, that were nevertheless all-defining, back then, when it was able to do or experience these things. I want to suggest that we have to move towards a philosophy of *manifest agency* if we wish to address the problem that both Marx and Wittgenstein expressed. And now the moral aspect of our investigation gains more definition; we begin to appreciate the connection between Marx's need to apprehend the personality of the worker and Wittgenstein's preoccupation with the autonomy of philosophy (and, in Marx's case, the autonomy of economy). The abstraction into the generic conception of a power is always *provisory*; it is a possibility. And this possibility, in its closeness to reality, cannot dispense with an actual person – the generic conception of agency stands as the possibility for mediation, but not as the actual mediation.

The distinction between categorical and reciprocal knowledge of movement and rest

68. Consider the interest we take in our favorite animals. These animals are capable of having meaningful representations of their environment and being the principle of their own movement, we apply intention-dependent concepts in descriptions of what they are doing. But our knowledge, as to the extent of their experience of their own movements, and the significance of these very movements, is limited. If we adopt a non-eliminativist conception of their experience, we leave enough space for a peculiarity that would not be captured by *our* descriptions of what they are doing – the non-eliminativist conception of their subjectivity implies a non-reductionism about their experience. This is showed by rejecting any privilege to descriptions of their experiences and actions as organic *mechanisms*.

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[87] *Philosophical Investigations,* §195.
[88] *Individuals: An essay in descriptive metaphysics,* p. 115.

The movement of these animals has a significance *for* them, one that may well lie beyond what we can grasp.[89] Is there any difficulty in imagining this? To us, their movement is intelligible, but we lack the knowledge of their subjective experience. We know how they move, but not what it is like to move like they do; in this sense, our reflexive knowledge does not apply. So, do we encounter any difficulty in conceiving a limit to our reflexive and hence, reciprocal knowledge? Does the world disappear from my horizon if I were to admit to myself that I do not know, nor could I ever know, what it is like to be a queen bee, or a worker ant? Philosophy has a limit, knowledge has a limit, and I have a limit. But when an ant precipitates itself into a swimming pool, I may shiver – I stare at it as it moves its legs franticly without any traction. The ant is slowly drowning because it cannot swim. It does not know how to swim, like I do, it does not know that some movements keep you on the surface of the water. It does not know that these movements can even be quite enjoyable once you get the hang of them. But then again, perhaps its body cannot float. The ant could not have learned from other ants how to save its own life in this situation. I do not think any other ant could have prevented this. No other ant could have imparted such vital knowledge to this particular ant. And I do know the ant belongs to a species, one that does exhibit the sort of dependence I am often tempted to transfer onto my own worldview. And so, finally, I rescue the ant from the water with my hand and put it to the side of the pool. I am not sure yet if it will survive or not. But the ant picks itself up. Its movements have now gained traction on the hard floor. Its legs seem to have recovered their purpose, and so the ant eventually disappears from view. I could not stand the thought that the ant would die alone, that it would die out of a precipitation I do not even understand. Why did it fall hopelessly into the pool? Do ants know they are unable to swim? Do they recognize water as a threat? I do not expect any answers to these questions, although I am fully aware that there are some answers. I mean, there are answers of the type Nagel analyzed, facts about the ant's perception, and perhaps even facts about the meaningful differentiation made by the ant about its environment. I find these answers absolutely adequate; they are adequate because these answers are, simply, as far as we can go.

[89] I am paraphrasing Nagel's comment on the concept of conscious organism and the actuality of subjective experience: "But fundamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to *be* that organism – something it is like *for* the organism," in "What is it like to be a bat," *Mortal questions,* p. 166.

What I do not believe is that we can fully understand the possibility of the sort of tragedy I projected onto the ant; I do not dare to speak of the ant dying in the pool as an actual tragedy. But I do not know, and I will never know, if it is a tragedy for that very ant. I do not know if the thought about the anonymity of its death could anguish the ant; I do know that such thoughts anguish many others like me. Admittedly, I do find great sadness in the thought that, had the ant died, its body would have been deprived of a final destination. The fact that its body would have been deprived of a burial place, or that its death would have no meaning for other ants that depended on it, that there would be no remembering of that ant after its death.

And now I believe we have given some content to the limit of categorical knowledge; it can, indeed, be established, but it leaves something out. It leaves out something we know in our case. In this particular sense, the subject is the limit of the world. What lies beyond this limit is another, and it can be known; it can be simply known. Certainly; but in some cases this simplicity might turn into violence of the sort that spring from ignorance, or rather, of the sort that refuses the possibility of ignorance, that refuses a limit. And so we can definitely know that the world does not disappear from our horizon if there are things that we do not know. And in the case of many animals, these are things we shall never know; these things, nevertheless, do not impugn my inability to be indifferent to the ant that was drowning. These are things that do not impugn that I save the ant, even if that ant could never save me. And perhaps this belongs to the order of the world, in other words that I could not be indifferent to the ant dying, although the ant could be indifferent to me dying, even though it would not be a crime if I had been indifferent to the dying ant.

Here we make our approximation to Aristotle more explicit. And I think that this approximation, or this form of revisionism, emerges in our preoccupation with the notion of *rest*. Now, I do not mean rest from exhaustion, which is to say rest as an imperative. In this case we mean definite rest or rest as death: the absence of a power to act, the absence of life that leaves a body that is no longer a person at all, as Aristotle put it. When I see the body of a dead ant floating in a swimming pool, it is no longer an ant; it *is*, if we take the Aristotelian definition to its furthest implication, no longer anything commendable. It has, finally, lost all its power. But what about the human body that rests in a cemetery? I mean, that human bodies are not simply left to float somewhere, like all the dead bugs in the pool (unless they are to be concealed or disrespected, because you do not step over a dead body you find in your path in the

way you step over the trunk of a dead tree); finally, what about, as Hegel said, the responsibility of the family, the *wedding of its blood relation to the bosom of the earth*? (§452) The power to act has perished, and the body is laid to rest at a fixed address, but the worry of those who love the person does not cease – this is the way in which we *know* our ultimate rest, the dead human body. Those who love the person who died continue to do so, and continue to care for the gravesite by weeding it and cleaning the marble headstone. They refuse to let the grave succumb to the violence of nature, since they cannot keep the body from the same harm. And this refusal does not consist simply in the generation of an *ersatz* activity as an empty symbolic gesture. This care says no more than what it is, namely the giving back of the body to the earth, the giving up of a material distinction between another and the human body as it slowly becomes part of nature; but still, it is the refusal to let this individuality, the very principle of the difference between the individual and nature, succumb to such deterioration. It is founded on very impossibility of being indifferent to a loved one, even under the unavoidability of death; it shows that love does not cease to exist when its object does.

69. We possess categorical knowledge of different forms of movement, but we do not have reciprocal knowledge of the experience of all of these forms of movement. Our attribution of intentions to other animals is perfectly functional, but we still lack something that is very much in place in our case. We apprehend a seagull gliding against the wind. But the extent of the enjoyment of the seagull, or the absence thereof, is concealed from us. It is something that pertains to the existence of seagulls, it is something that holds significance within their experience of the world.

This categorical way of knowing their movement is expressed in our classification of species relative to forms of movement: to run, to fly, and to swim. We conceive of these as subservient to the attainment of what these animals, that belong to these forms, need or want. As Aristotelians, we apprehend these forms as the principle of their vitality. But this functional characterization does not prevent us from allowing their experience to have any significance for them *as* ours does to us. After all, the reciprocal knowledge we have about our own movement encompasses more than the functionality of our movement, it licenses us to critically assess the reasons and motives of our movements as well as the manner in which these are

performed – this encompassing knowledge is knowledge of our movements *as* actions.

The distinction between categorical and reciprocal knowledge of movement is based on a lack. And this lack is brought about by the impossibility to apply our reflexive knowledge to other species.

We may put the point this way: when you observe an athlete walking on a balance beam, you observe him acting. His movements on the balance beam are an exercise of control against some tendencies of our body; indeed, his movements are defying some material difficulties. This is perhaps something you could never imagine being able to do, and although you do not have that experience (you are not a trained gymnast), you do know how difficult it is just to stand straight on a beam. The possibility of a reciprocal relation is grounded on the possession of reflexive knowledge. And this knowledge is not insubstantial, nor empty; in the case of the athlete, it may even be the basis of your appreciation of the difficulty of his movements and your appreciation of the individual athlete – in this regard we see *reflexive knowledge as the measure of subjective recognition*.

Our notion of an individual person is now summoned. My apprehension of the athlete's actions implies my reflexive-distance to him; this is to say that I apprehend him *as another person*. The significance of his movements exhibits the dignity of his person. I know him as *that* athlete and through the difficulty of his actual movements. I apprehend the exuberance of his strength, the intelligence of his agility, and the endurance of his determination. I know the athlete reciprocally as *another person* and I apprehend his actions as having him as the source of their reality. The athlete *does what happens*. If he breaks a record, he enters human history because of his achievement, because of *who* he became – and here we find human history is conflated with the history of individual achievement.

Dread of limitation is dread of existence.
The Essence of Christianity, p.15

5. Becoming

On the importance of investigating a non-traditional multiplicity of practical concepts to obtain an adequate representation of agency

70. Agency is a central notion pertaining to practical philosophy. A manifest representation of agency will contain a multiplicity of practical concept that may lie outside the traditional scope of an investigation into practical reasoning.

This is a necessity of a theory of agency with a materialistic aspiration. Agents within the world and in possession of a shared power to act acquire personal beliefs about their individual capacities and natural talents – they are individuals within history. A theory of action could hardly restrain itself to a definition of action *per se*, while leaving the concept of agency untouched. The consequence of doing so amounts to the introduction of non-historical agents (*time-sliced agents*). These agents, unlike us, are incapable of valuing the essence of the concept of human action, namely, *achievement*.

The idea of achievement introduces a set of related concepts that are crucial to the understanding of agency: the concept of failure, the concept of activity, the concept of a personal limit, the concept of privation, the concept of activity, and the concept of improvement. Before inquiring into these, I want to begin by addressing another concept, namely, the concept of an impediment. The concept of impediment divides, I want to suggest, into two different directions – internal and external. To pay attention to the concept of impediment is to pay attention to an initial intuition that situates agents in their world by conceptualizing the familiar friction they are bound to experience.

The content of a manifest representation of agency lies within this friction. The sort of agents I want to consider improve their talents through practice and build tools to, for instance, curve hot metal. They act, rather than bring about events, which is to say they achieve something when they do.

I shall contend for the thesis that the correct representation of agency is the manifest representation of agency. And for this particular picture to be in place, I must position the notion of agency at the center of the picture. The manifest representation of agency is therefore nothing but an inquiry into the triviality of human action – which I believe reveals the ground for the formation of personal beliefs (and is how one becomes a person).

71. The consideration of the manifest image of agency is equally a consideration of realized freedom. It is neither an investigation into the concept of human freedom as a presupposition, nor as a problematic hypothesis, but rather, an investigation into experienced freedom. By realized freedom I simply mean the experience agents know of achieving and failing; for example, the sort of resistance that comes with some of the ends they strive for, such as *the exhaustion of rehearsal or the enjoyment of accomplishment*.

This way of looking at human action aims at rescuing instrumental reasoning from the accusation that reduces it to the bare bones presentation of it. The notion that there should be such a thing as dignity in knowing *how to do* a certain thing, or in accomplishing a certain thing, does not come as a surprise to practical philosophy. Practical philosophy is, indeed, reason in the service of practice, and practice could hardly be conceived apart from those who bring it about.

The variety of practical concepts I am proposing to introduce as one philosophical topic carry with them a continuation of the theme of reductionism. A putative philosophical behaviorist would assume that the safest way to explain these concepts would imply the search for adequate behavioral criteria. As said earlier, I wish to locate these agents exactly where we find ourselves every day, doing something with our bodies in the world. But I intend to treat these practical concepts from an internal perspective – from the perspective I know *from myself* and apply to others.

The delineation of this peculiar position may be of marginal interest for the behaviorist. I believe that attention to the position from which we address this philosophical topic grounds our explanations in the familiarity we have gained. What is marginal to the behaviorist ends up unsettling that which he knows, or at least expects, in virtue of being a person. We understand that there should be a describable mechanism of how we acquire beliefs about ourselves through acting, and this comes

hardly as a surprise to us; this is not the same as saying that this description will be unproblematic and self-evident.

The chief defect of old materialism, maintained Marx, was its contemplative aspect. Behavioral criteria from contemplation may, in the end, prove to be in a way, too general for my purpose. The behaviorist, like many of us, might still have to ask someone why he or she is smiling. And this stands as proof that the generality of behavioral criteria has not, in the end, solved all questions both the world and other persons might elicit from a behaviorist.

On internal impediments

72. Suppose you are trying to play a rhythm on a bass guitar in accordance with a metronome. You notice you keep phasing out of time. Keeping up with time is proving to be difficult, and yet, what you want to achieve depends precisely on you being able to keep in time.

When you notice this difficulty, you are put in a peculiar position: you can distinctly discern a direction in what is impeding your end – it runs from the metronome in your direction. You do not complain about the accurateness of the metronome, or, say, the strings of your bass guitar. If you discern the direction of the impediment, you co-extensively discern what you have to address – *your sense of time*.

Your sense of time is disclosed to you in this fashion. As an impediment to your action, your sense of time is practically qualified. It is not up to your end; it is defective or in need of improvement. It is impeditive to you in a quite unavoidable and distinct way; it comes to light at a particular moment of your activity, and in an unavoidable connection with the continuation of that activity.

Now you know your sense of time. You do not know it plainly, for instance, that it exists, that you already knew before just *now*, but rather, you know it as having a limit, your limit. But we have not yet fully addressed the notion of a limit. Provisionally, we can say that what lies outside this limit lies outside of who you are. But the belief you have, what has been disclosed to you, is something about your sense of time (rhythm) and is something about yourself.

On external impediments

73. Before me is a blacksmith who is trying to curve iron into a spiral shape. As he heats the iron, the material loses more density than he expected. As he curves the metal into a spiral, the iron snaps. The blacksmith has now to reconsider what he is doing. What impedes him from attaining the spiral shape is in the loss of density of the material. Like a storm, too powerful to let me get to where I intend to go, the impediment is *outside.* The blacksmith gets a thicker piece of iron. He repeats the task and the spiral is done; similarly, the storm quiets down, now I can leave the house.

We make these distinctions as a matter of practicality. The distinction is implied in whatever it is we are going to do next.

An interpretation of the concept of limit as 'My limit'

74. One specific way to address your sense of time is practice. The powerlessness of practice is failure.

In this context, addressing your sense of time means to rehearse and implies time spent in addressing the possibility of a strict conformity to the metronome. Behind the structure of practice is the possibility of achieving a given end. It is the possibility of reaching a certain level of musicianship, for example. And this is time spent addressing oneself, but not in the manner of the Aristotelian doctor who cures his own wounds.

Medicine is applied as a body of knowledge to the wound. It is, as Aristotle puts it, a happy accident that the wounded man is also a doctor. Contrariwise, it is not an accident at all that the musician who addresses his sense of rhythm is doing so. I mean he would not be doing so if he had no aspirations of becoming a certain kind of musician. On the one hand, the Aristotelian doctor does not have to be doing, nor even attempting to do anything in particular, in order to get injured. And it is, in any case, simply *as* a man that the doctor gets injured, not as a doctor. On the other hand, the musician discloses his sense of time *as* a musician, and by this I mean, only *as* a musician, and therefore, *because* of his musicianship. Virtually any person can tap their foot to a rhythm of course, but it is not just any person tapping along with a rhythm who is concerned with the stability of their sense of time; the person who merely taps their foot to a rhythm does not have to think about, let alone know, any facts about their sense of rhythm. Such facts about themselves, and their sense of rhythm, do not impinge on their future. These facts do not impinge on these people,

perhaps because their sense of rhythm could never define them before themselves; or conversely, they will never feel tempted to reduce themselves to their sense of rhythm; and now I am assuming that this is indeed something that might threaten the musician at one point in his development.

Back to the Aristotelian doctor: the wound is a felt aggression, as is any other pathology; it is something that attacks one in an instant, and sometimes it is something that develops surreptitiously, not something that is developed as a form of aspiration. For this reason, the wound, or the pathology, may be a form of discovery, but not at all in the sense we are after. The bass player is, through practice, trying to improve his sense of rhythm; he is after the acquisition of a piece of self-knowledge. In the end, some circumstance may prove the inconsistency of one's belief in the curative power of some particular medicine, while the failure of improvement will exclude the bass player from a certain performance – it will taint his future *as* a musician.

If the Aristotelian doctor fails to cure his wounds, even though he did everything he could, he proves the limit of his medical knowledge. If the bass player fails to improve his sense of time, after he did everything he could, he proves his personal limit as a bass player. And now, *my* limit, and the knowledge I have of my limit, is not a simple matter of knowing what I am not. It is not an apophatic stance I take towards myself. I do not simply want to know about that which I could never become, or as Fichte puts it, I do not want to try what has been made impossible to me by my nature[90] (I take it that nature means here nothing but the species-generic thought). And unlike the Aristotelian doctor, I do not want to know further what is perverting my intact form, what may threateningly develop in me, and in the end, even deny my existence. In discerning my limit – say, in discovering the limit to my sense of time – I am discovering what I can become. And this becoming is not independent from what I now aspire to, nor from the history of my aspiration, a history susceptible to reappraisals I cannot predict at the outset; and, finally, it is certainly not independent from my activity, the practice of being a musician, a practice that did not begin nor will end with me.

[90] *The Vocation of Man*, p. 112.

'I and my activity'

75. When we are asked what we do, we often reply *'I am a…'*. For example, to be the bass player in question is to be the bass player with that particular sense of rhythm. On the other hand, the illness that afflicts the Aristotelian doctor is, as an illness, to be removed or controlled and thus not developed; or, its presence in the doctor as a patient is wholly perverse. Again, *'I am an asthmatic'* defines me as a patient; *'I am a bass player'* defines me as an agent.

We can discuss the history of my asthma – it is documented in a hospital file somewhere; the author of this history is my doctor. But this history is the history of something that happened to me, even if, right from the very beginning, it something I try to control (I was told to do so) by mimicking the Aristotelian doctor's reflexive gestures. I take medicine in order to prevent the flaring up of this perversion or to prevent the further deterioration of my health. But the history of my asthma is not marked by improvement – not in the exact same sense –, nor is it marked by my personal development; it is, instead, marked by crisis and the successful prevention of future crises. (The need to bring out this contrast springs from having to clear up the sense of *addressing* I wish to consider and also from the sort of limit I wish to consider, since, both my limit and my asthma exhibit a permanence in me.)

In rehearsal, the bass player practices in order to improve his sense of time; he practices in order to be able to play the more difficult piece he was unable to play at first. The improvement of his sense of time brings out the future directedness of his activity in connection with his past playing. Rehearsing for something (e.g. a performance or audition) is not simply exhausted by the meeting of that particular end, but is, as an activity, as musicianship, the active structuring of the *existence* of this individual agent. By this, I am implying that there is an important existential meaning in the overcoming of, say, a tendency in one's playing; this might even be something that seems rather trivial to others, but it may nevertheless be (and it often *is*) something that assumes a crucial importance to me; it is something that is, for me, the expression of genuine humility before my practice – we determine this as the absence of indifference towards oneself as a member of one's practice.

Of course, a limit may exclude you altogether from an activity, but it may just limit you *inside* that very activity. A beginner, who lacks any sense of time, may not find his way to any sort of improvement. If so, he is excluded from the activity of bass playing, although not in the sense of an individual who suffers a privation, e.g. a

person who loses a leg and is excluded from running; strictly, this sort limit emerges in practice, and it is not an attack on the body. Within the world and within history, the bass player exists within his limit and the choices that are available to him. And now, he has been given the responsibility for the continuation of his practice; he is now before his future as a musician, and all of this is nothing but a demand on his personal intelligence, or a demand on his self-consciousness, and also a demand on his dignity if someone or something threatens to take this future away from him.

My limit is discerned in my acting, it is belongs to my moral sense of achievement. Practical philosophy occupies the internal position of agency the minute it becomes concerned with this particular interpretation of the concept of limit. And in doing so, it brings the concept of an individual person to the foreground. This amounts to a philosophical consideration of one's activity, or of one's profession, or of one's vocation as one's sense of achievement and as one's sense of self-identity.

The notion of activity demands the consideration of the internal perspective of the agent – the connection between self-identity and activity within time

76. An internal description of this kind is immediately recognizable to us, even though it might elicit our reflexive distance towards another; one might not recognize such a description as the position one holds, but we certainly recognize the form of such a description when we see an example of it.

Here is an example of the internal perspective on an activity:

> In the eyes of others a man is a poet if he has written one good poem. In his own he is only a poet at the moment when he is making his last revision to a new poem. The moment, before, he was still only a potential poet; the moment after, he is a man who has ceased to write poetry, perhaps forever.[91]

The *before* and *after* Auden speaks of are anchored in one's capacity to sustain one's practice. To become a musician is not simply to learn how to play the bass, but to actively engage with bass playing *from now onwards*. And this engagement is immune to indifference; it is, perhaps, even immune to the *eschatological indifference* Weber saw in St. Paul.[92] The idea that I cannot be indifferent to my bass playing, that is, to the quality of my bass playing, is here the same as saying that I cannot be

[91] Auden, "Making, Knowing and Judging" in *The Dyer's Hand*, p. 41.
[92] *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism,* p. 31.

indifferent to myself; and, therefore, if I cannot be indifferent to myself, then I cannot be indifferent to my activity. But the position Auden describes implies the acknowledgment of a threat: the acknowledgement that my stopping to be a musician, or a poet, is, possibly, a threat to myself, to who I am; I may be able to merely intuit the extent and seriousness of this threat without honestly being able to say I fully understand it. And if this activity stops, this absence of indifference may turn into a form of sadness I cannot shake. The *forever* Auden intuits is a threat that may very well be ahead of me. And I do not wish to say that I am *just* a musician, and in a similar way, I do not wish to say that I am, simply, my sense of rhythm. My musicality could *cease to be* for various different reasons, and if it does, I will then simply be an unmusical man again. Perhaps the *Pauline indifference* is but a form of consolation; it is the assurance that my soul may have it better than I did, even if it is I who hears the calling and not my soul.[93] It is the assurance that even if I am a slave to others and cannot therefore enjoy myself I am *still* a person. But all this comes too late to avoid one's own knowing of this threat. It has already become clear that with the deterioration of a part of me comes the deterioration of my happiness. And with all of this comes the deterioration of freedom. If I am deprived of enjoying myself I can still be free, but I cannot apprehend my freedom as a *gift*.

Barth asked: "Is not the free theologian also a man and as such a recipient of the gift of freedom?"[94] He then goes on to list the precepts he deems as reasonable for the apprehension of his freedom according to his own talents. And so he begins every single time with the phrase "A free theologian…", a phrase he understands, strictly, as expressing his self-conscious life according to his vocation. As such, this vocation is *pro me*, that is, he who completes this phrase apprehends his personal freedom as a gift. But, of course, this gift is, if shared, also *pro nobis*. And it is so not in the manner in which Pauline bondage may also be for the sake of others; in St. Paul this harmony has been broken, perhaps forever.

But should we not invert the order of Barth's question? I mean, a man becomes musical, but first he was a man. Auden is aware that the poet *came into being*, and his anxiety is not over when this moment of becoming, but rather over the moment where it could cease to be. And if it does, then the unmusical man is still a man, although perhaps no longer a musician. But we do understand Barth's

[93] 1 Cor. 7:17-24.
[94] 'The Gift of Freedom' in *The Humanity of God*, p. 88.

forgetfulness, we do know a gift can be lost, but we also know that to have been in the possession of such a gift, even if only for a time, is bound to have an enduring effect; and this effect cannot dissipate without dragging the entire identity of the man in question along with it. So, finally, and although I cannot argue for this thoroughly just yet, I believe that Barth's association of vocation as a positive human action. Personality and human dignity are not simply a matter of doctrine, but rather a deep-rooted problem of political philosophy. There is, always, a latent political concern in theology, namely, that a society may grant freedom, but not as a gift; or that there is a connection between the self-enjoyment and self-constitution of personality and justice, which is a connection that can be destroyed.

77. My becoming a musician is a concern I have *all the time*. There is a *before* and an *after* to my being a musician, and a *before* and an *after* a particular phase of development, or to my overcoming of particular difficulties. The first personal perspective of an activity is therefore not instantaneous; I become a musician within history.

The disclosing of one's limit and the knowledge of one's aspirations, in sum, our self-conscious existence shapes our individual representation of time. The before and after Auden addresses pertains to a representation of time *as* history, and history *as* the individual history of a poet. Here, the sense of before and after is plagued by a distinct notion of failure, as much as the existence of a particular poem is by that of achievement. To have ends such as to play slap bass technique, or revise a poem, constitutes the fabric out of which being a bass player or poet is made of. And, equally important, to cease doing such things as playing slap bass or rehearsing would put an end to being a bass player – the continuity of the activity is the doing of those things that constitute it. This form of continuity represents the continuity of one's identity as a musician. And therefore, this continuity *all of the time* is to be understood as a nexus comprising practice and identity. Time can be merely felt through its passing, in a dream for example; it also can be felt as boredom; it can even be felt as a threat. I do not wish to argue that what I am calling the practical representation of time is exhaustive as an interpretation of time. I do wish to argue, nevertheless, that the practical aspect of time is *vital* for any intact person. Since the suspension of the self-constituting activity, whatever this activity is, e.g. of a musician, doctor, poet, would be detrimental to a healthy mind, and hence, a healthy

person. There is, of course, the retired musician, who is a musician with a past history. But it is not at all ridiculous to suppose that his previous musical history does not figure to him in the exact same way as it does to us. What was, for him, the end of his activity is for us the historical privilege of authorship. He is still the one who did this or that, which might not be necessarily a comforting thought to him.

In a dream I act effortlessly; I act outside real time, and sometimes, I am unable to act at all. I dream as a man, of course, and therefore, I dream like any other man, although I may sometimes dream as a musician, while another man might dream as a poet. But in my dreams, say, in my dreams as a musician, my efforts, or my absolute paralysis, are not something I mean to do. All that happens in my dreams may mean something, I am sure of this, but I do not mean anything at all by any of it. The actions in my dreams just happen to me and before me. They do so while I am at rest, while my body is lying down and static (and my practical reasoning is, of course, in a similar state). I do not even breathe like I usually do when I am exerting myself when making an effort to do something, although I might wake up breathing heavily *as if* I had been making such an effort. And so, time simply passes outside the order of practice; time passes as sleep, as a regenerative imposition. Inside the dream, I do not think within time, that is, I do not reason practically. And so I might remember the action in the dream without even knowing how much time could have been implied by that very action – picking up a coin from the ground can take years, becoming a bass player can be done in an instant. This simply means that, in the dream, the specific nature of an action and its categorical importance is altogether lost; I do not act, not amongst others, not within the world, not within time, and therefore not at all. Any action in a dream may even destroy the very idea of a recognizable category; I might walk like a cat, fly like a bird, and another man might take my shadow away from me. This is because, in the dream, all meaning is afloat and suspended in thin air without anything that could ever tie it down. What I do may mean nothing to me; what I say may be unrecognizable, and now, unlike when I am awake, none of this even has to bear any consequences on me. I mean, I am not angry, or frightened, that what I say is unrecognizable, or that what I do is meaningless: I am dreaming and this is what dreams are made of – nothing gets done, nothing is impeded, and nothing I see myself doing in the dream belongs to the history of any activity.

Activity as the logos that interprets a number of given connected performances

78. The bass player does not spend his days simply being a bass player; rather, he plays the bass, tunes it, and replaces its strings. The *now* of the musician issues in connected exercises of instrumental reasoning, a variety of actions that offer stability to his activity – the fabric of his activity as a musician resides in his concern for the various tasks he has to perform.

But I wish to address the notion of connected performances for another reason. There is something important in the thought that agents are *within* the world. And this world is the one that our instrumental reasoning grabs on to. This is to say that no matter how my practical thinking spans, it does so within the world as a relevant constraint – it spans non-indifferent practical reasoning, as reasoning towards achievement. And both the bass player and I are not outside of this connectedness; we are the source of this connectedness.

I am suggesting that there is some gain in an investigation of practical reasoning that starts with the personal reality of a given agent. My reason behind this starting point is that by avoiding a representation of agency *as such*, we also avoid agents *as such* or generic agents. For example, an understanding of a musician's rehearsals has to make sense of a series of repeated actions. A practical representation of this form of repetition cannot only make reference to the end sought in the future; it also has to understand the connectedness amongst the various performances spanning from the past up until now. It has to make sense of the *gain* in each step taken. These steps contain the specificity of what the musician is in fact doing, e.g. addressing problems related to a piece of music, and/or related to a personal inability to play that very piece. The bass player repeats the passage in order to play it at a concert, and he repeats the passage in order to get the time right, and also in order to become a better musician.

We have long since passed any form of representational *simplicity*. The rehearsal may go well or it might not. And none of this is a simple a matter of repetition, although I do absolutely need to repeat these things. I am behind the continuation of this repetition, or even better, this repetition is what I absolutely need to do and I only stop when this repetition has affected me; I stop when I finally know how to do something. And my repeating is not a mechanical event either; I do not produce something entirely different from myself, for example, in the way a machine that cuts the vinyl record does, not insofar as it is I who produces the performance and

so it is *my* performance (even though I could sell it, and therefore treat it as a commodity); and also, it is not a mechanical event insofar as I *re*produce myself as a musician, and this reproduction does not even have to happen on the same scale. (For example, I have now become a better musician, which is certainly an effect of diligent rehearsal and not of simple and senseless repetition.)

All of these steps represent *deliberative episodes;* they are subsumed to an end, but they are, as real episodes, constrained by the difficulties of particular actions. These episodes are constrained by how things go, and also by things that one did not foresee. The action, what one did, or what happened, does not have to simply be an *outcome*, that is, a functional output (think again of Wittgenstein's machine). It rarely is for the practicing musician or poet. And therefore, I believe, it should also rarely be for the philosopher of action. The philosopher who interprets the actions of the musician, or of the person who waits for the bus to go to work, interprets the *logos* that joins everything that gets done. This *logos* is sustained by a personal conception of an end, it is but incarnate self-consciousness.

Still, this sort of concern regarding personal agency is not necessarily a demand for all theoretical representations of the category of human action. But it is a *given* pertaining to the manifest cognition of action. Our investigation presupposes a certain kind of agent. One that is not indifferent to a great number of things, including him. The presence of connected performances is unavoidable for the apprehension of meaningful human action, and we have to further address these concepts in an inquiry into practical reasoning. Of course, there is such a thing as pathological disconnected action, and there is, also, forced senseless repetition. But the existence of these forms of agency do not undermine the present investigation – they simply give us one more clue about the moral aspect of human action.

The required permanence

79. By addressing the notion of permanence, I am, in the context of the present discussion, trying to offer an interpretation of its function in the formation of first-personal beliefs. Without the acquisition of first-personal beliefs, we are unable to think of the *gain* we have previously discerned as a form of connectedness, and consequently, our interpretation of the notion of *logos* would be incomplete.

This sort of permanence is often manifested when beliefs regarding the stability of a capacity become blatantly apparent. For example, the first time you

stepped on a bicycle, after you removed your training wheels, you may have entertained the belief that you would reach the end of the street; you even might have had some reasons for that confidence. But if you do not reach the end of the street, and you decide to attempt it again, you do not have a permanent belief that you do indeed know how to ride a bike. And so you may attempt and fall again until you do not fall anymore.

Such a concern is quite common. It pertains to what we simply call *knowing how to ride a bike*. Acting pertains to this form of knowledge in an essential way. It is a condition of its acquisition and a condition of its permanence. Its actuality is part of the plans and considerations of the person who knows how to ride a bike. It is simply something she considers whenever it is pertinent – she relies on the stability of her capacity because this capacity is permanent, that is, it is not *present in one moment and absent in the next*.[95]

This permanence is an implied element in the representation of practical reasoning. For instance, consider how the aspiration of an apprentice is structured: the apprentice may intend to play slap bass technique, but not instantaneously. He wants to achieve that technique and starts therefore with exercises for his fingering. The permanence that issues in being able to play slap bass on command will involve sustaining a first personal intention throughout practice. Now, this gaining of knowledge will sustain our capacity to refer to ourselves, that is, this permanence will be behind the apprehension of the bass player *as* the bass player he has become. This sort of first personal knowledge can, of course, be challenged, although the circumstances under which it can be are in itself a topic too wide for the present argument. It suffices, therefore, to say that self-reference cannot dispense with the ways a person has of gaining knowledge about herself, since it is not simply a matter of knowing a guaranteed reference, which is the capacity to putatively be in a position to answer the question about *who* these thoughts or beliefs belong to. And so, we cannot do without action as the source of such beliefs. Perhaps we can simply recall the present matter by imagining the difference between answering the questions "who here knows how to play the bass?" and "how do you know that you know how to play the bass?" And I do not simply mean that a reply to the second sort of question may differ significantly in kind, that is, that I might give you an example instead of an

[95] I am taking this phrase from Hampshire, *Freedom of the individual*, p. 65.

explanation. The difference I am pointing to concerns the fact that there is a history of my learning how to play the bass, and this history cannot be told without firstly appreciating the primitive status of the concept of action. It is not simply the history of what happened to me, as say the history a kidnapping is. It is, instead, the history of my learning, of the structure of my learning, that is, the history of my practice.

To learn how to do something takes time; to become a musician or anything else takes time. We have aims within time, as the time necessary for the development of our abilities.

Achievement and failure as personal history – Becoming

80. Consider the following thought: *"I have become the musician I am now."* The proper understanding of this assertion is personal-historical. It is the self-conscious thought about the connection between the principle of personal identity and one's temporally extended activity. This presupposes action as personal-history; it orders what has happened into categories of achievement and failure, that is, as meaningful action. Therefore, *"I have become the musician I am now"* is not necessarily co-extensive with *"I am the musician I aspired to be*," but neither does it exclude any sort of achievement. One putative interpretation for the latter statement would be a sort of self-imposed demand – a form of perfectionism. Such a stance is, very often, accompanied by something to which the notion of achievement has applicability, although the degree of satisfaction is, of course, personal, as are the reasons, or lack of thereof, that may come to count as achievement. But, in any case, to aspire to be a certain kind of musician could hardly be some sort of frictionless, instantaneous guaranteed want. And therefore, I do not believe we can address this thought without addressing the concept of *failure*.

Anscombe was aware of how much failure interested us – the sort of interest that leads to a philosophical investigation –, but she did not place this interest in its proper context.[96] It is not simply that failure occasionally debunks our confidence in action, that the notion of stability we expect goes amiss, but rather, that in the context of *becoming someone* failure is endowed with moral significance. Perhaps we can begin to approach this thought in the following manner: what would the absence of failure mean? I know I cannot apprehend myself, my complete self, at once. There is

[96] *Intention*, §48.

no Archimedean lever I could occupy in relation to myself. But, if there was one, and I could see myself perfectly given *in potentia*, what would the rest of my life look like to me? Would I be merely waiting for it? Or avoid it? Would I surrender to it? Would I try to speed things up? And, would none of this have an effect on those very potentialities, I mean, what if speed things up in a hasty manner? Of course, all of these questions are senseless, but I intend to recall something when I ask them, namely that the possibility of a sane life would be entirely lost if I were to stand before this final list of my being *in potentia*. Happiness or sadness over oneself would be in an instant, and so life would pass in an instant, even if not biologically-speaking. In this absolute moment of self-apprehension, I would merely stand frighteningly before myself; and the fact that I might not even recognize myself in this potentiality is not entirely out of the picture. We often try to do things for virtue, as Anscombe puts it, or even for pleasure, with complete and utter failure. And these are but moments of discovery. The question "why do I not enjoy this any longer?" may well catch me off guard, and is it not the case that I will probably not be able to give a proper reply to this question, at least not for a while. But when I discover such things, I am, like the bass player, before myself. There is a parallel here to the movement of conversion. In the moment of conversion I am, evermore so, before myself. I cannot conceal anything from myself, not even attempt to do so. There is no partial conversion, but only failed conversion. And so there may well be such a thing as reiterated failure. There is, as Barth says, an attempt by *man to be man* – which is a history that interests God.[97] This history is, of course, a *postlapsarian history*; it is history as power, or history as injustice.[98] But still, it is in the interest of God; it is a worthy attempt: it is both a fall and the receiving of a gift. And so, there is such a thing as an *attempt to be oneself*. I mean, without failure there is no fathomable life and there is no worthy history. And even if a history without a fall would perhaps be the most blessed kind of history, such a history would not even amount to the history of a Saint. If there is such a thing as a life without failure, or conversion without fall, we cannot but praise it, of course; but for all those to whom this does not apply, there is the virtue of charity, even if it is before oneself.

"I have become the musician I am now" is of course a form of achievement. It is the enjoyment of one's freedom, of one's activity as a reality. It is the knowledge of

[97] 'The Humanity of God' in *The Humanity of God,* p. 54.
[98] *The Epistle to the Romans,* p. 77.

the many things I can do, the knowledge of my history, or the history of my activity up until now. But the way I know this history is in a very peculiar way. I am always before it. To be *before it* could cease to be, and if it did cease, this ceasing would be, in a way, *my* ceasing. So I do not merely tell my story, I make my story, even if not alone. Perhaps, in a similar but not entirely coextensive way, I become virtuous. I acquire virtue, but I could never do so in complete solitude without anyone to teach me. Is virtue, or vocation, still virtue and vocation if never tested? Is there, for the human mind, I mean, an absolute, eternal, potentiality? (I observe this with respect to myself such as the contortionist I will never be, the perfect man I will never be.) In my case, and I suppose in almost everyone's case, when I tell the story that led up to the man I am now, or to the musician I am now, such an eternal potentiality is entirely out of the picture. I do not, not even for a second, feel the metaphysical pressure to discern the status of vocation or virtue; these may well be natural or unnatural kinds, but virtue and vocation are, as existence, as my existing, fully material. They are as much in my actions as they are in the reactions of others – in their faces, in the way they look at me. These were my aspirations before, and are now in my achievements and failures, in sum, what happened. And that is the only story I have to tell now, that I have fulfilled some of it, although I am not done until I cease to be.

A first approach to the postlapsarian being of man – an anticipation of the argument to come, which is demanded by the present course of argument

81. Perhaps we can now better understand Barth's idea. His *humanity of God* is a form of theological humility. It rescues our attempts to become ourselves from despair; it rescues this effort from complete anonymity, from being undone with every failure, and it does so before God. God's interest in these personal histories, and in human history in general, is his interest in our condition as his creatures; but we are also, even if in a significantly different way, the creatures of ourselves. And this is how far Barth is willing to go in order to bring God closer to us, and closer to what may seem the insignificance of our attempts and aspirations. He is willing to confound our interest in ourselves, and in each other, in sum, the totality of what resides within the confinement of our reciprocity, with our understanding of God.

Our being is not an *ex nihilo* perfection – it could never be, not from the very beginning; and so there is much to do be done, and much to be hoped for. And all of this depends on time, firstly, in the truistic sense that history depends on time, and

then, secondly, and perhaps more complexly, on human action. And this is, namely, what we come to do in the absence of that which often impedes us. The *humanity of God*, the interest of God in human action, dispels our belief that humanity fell from a perfect state of nature. It brings into view the awful truth that this fall was, is, and has been, continuous; to fall is to give in to nature, to declare as frivolous the aspirations that mankind could entertain for the future in light of contemporaneous failure. But this conception of understanding, or of reciprocal comprehension implied by the liberty to predicate humanity to the existence of God is, equally, the evocation of the feeling of a humble kind of self-love. It is, certainly, a blow to the feeling of self-love, which is to know one's faults as a sin, and to know one's failures; but it is also to a calling to have genuine humility before oneself. This is simply to know, once and for all, that humankind has always been more like Rousseau's philosopher than like Rousseau's savage (in other words, humankind is always unable to sleep soundly at night). And therefore, humanity could never be taught without first thinking the perennial reflexive gestures it is bound to think. It could never be taught without thinking about the Aristotelian doctor, or the bass player, without first thinking about its *faculty of self-improvement*, and finally, it could never be taught without firstly thinking about its self-inflicted wounds, the wounds Rousseau ardently wished had a definite historical beginning.

The self-conscious apprehension of the *faculty of self-improvement* brought into human life the attempt to be indifferent to its demands, and so, finally, it brought guilt into humanity.[99] Other mammals, Rousseau once observed, took a surprisingly short time to fully develop. Perhaps, and I am not entirely sure about this, it is because their being is so closely related to the strength and development of their bodies and organs – nature makes them fit in an amazingly short period of time. *Amazingly short* for us, that is. For we are dependent on reflexive gestures to address ourselves in order to bring about change in ourselves, and to develop our own talents and to cure our own wounds. And now, once again, we are closer to Fichte, who could not imagine progress as anything else but a legacy, something one generation leaves to the next, than we are to Rousseau's savage, who can hardly think beyond each day he manages to survive. We have to abandon the history Rousseau wanted to tell, because of what, I believe, is an imperative reason: Rousseau's history is not the history we

[99] *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,* p. 11.

have made, and, consequently, it is not the history that interests God. This history of the savage, the history of the absence of self-consciousness, is nothing but an attempt to evade the reality of evil. It is an attempt to retreat into a pure heart, a heart that could naturally do no harm, or that could, at any rate, never know the harm it had in fact done. And so, the savage of the *Discourse* became the man who later, in the *Social Contract*, professes to an abstract faith (a faith purer than any traditional faith). And slowly, after managing to evade, if I am permitted to use the following anachronism, his responsibility for the history of *Spirit*, this man of a pure heart, the man who refuses any darkness inside of him, who refuses any blow to his self-love, became the tyrant who was, very much like the savage: blind to the evils his pure ideas and heart could engender.

How absurd it is to attempt to invent a beginning for human history. And yet, for Rousseau, the history of humanity could never be the history of guilt. If he came to see this very truth, "nature" as he conceived of it, would disappear. Mankind would not have started to deteriorate after its knowledge of the faculty of self-improvement, but after its surrender to it.

As unlikely as it may seem, Feuerbach was in this respect a perfect Rousseauian.[100] What he saw in the language of theology was an attempt to conceal its very anthropological nature, and in turn, he saw in this concealed anthropology the danger of an indirect love. He saw in the *humanity of God* mere humiliation, and no humility. And coextensively, he did not discern any danger in his proud reductionism. Man should love mankind directly, and not through the existence of God. And this love is the possession of a heart; but in the absence of history, or in the absence of guilt and humility, this direct self-love has proved to turn quickly into terror. In the absence of God, there is only the truth of my heart, and so, how could my heart ever do anything wrong? Mankind can no longer attempt to be itself before God, and it can no longer sin when it gives up on itself. And finally, when Rousseau's thought has approached its completion, and a form of spiritual monism has taken hold of our thinking, supported by a surrogate civil faith, then the final question becomes: how could nature ever be wrong *for the book of nature never lies*? Becoming, even in the face of a distorted nature, in the possession of a heart that is permeable to evil, is very different from this Rousseauian nature. And now, action also means an entirely

[100] *The Essence of Christianity*, pp. 56-57.

different thing. The *teleology of aspiration* lies outside the invented history of the savage because it is meaningless for the savage; for him, there is no *becoming*, at least not of the sort we have described so far. Of course, there is no such history as the history of the savage; there is only the history that Barth described as the display of power, the history of guilt, of failure, both before ourselves and others and before God – this is the history that interests God, the history that never reached the perfect justice we apprehend in revealed truth. And so, political philosophy always despairs for the restoration of the concept of personality, which is a concept theology cannot do without. It needs to avoid contempt amongst men, but it wishes to incite their self-love; it needs to preserve authority, but it has to deny the authority of religion. And so it begins to harbor many ideas pertaining to theology, always unable to predict the effects of the surrogates it created. We are indeed the *political animal*, but we cannot see ourselves entirely in this manner because we cannot simply reduce ourselves to savagery. And so, when we act towards others, and ourselves, we begin to discern how our politics only imperfectly follow from our nature. And, of course, we discern how indifferent we are towards this imperfection, that is, toward each other.

Feuerbach's anthropomorphic God constantly misses what his materialism correctly discerned in the concept of action: the moral truth that our limit as persons is revealed to us in the course of our self-conscious active lives; and so, no political stability can survive if men are to be thought as beyond redemption, or as having ceased to be good savages, or as subtracted from their abilities and vocations. But for now, and before I suspend this train of thought, only to resume it later on in the following chapter, I believe we can conclude that all these determinations, to know and say what man *is*, is a form of power – there is an essential connection between the concepts of power and personality.

6. Dependence and Tyranny

The emancipation of the state from religion
is not the emancipation of actual man from religion.
On the Jewish Question, p.227

Introductory remarks

82. The origin of tyranny divides between forms of brutal instrumentalism and pureness of heart. Tyranny is always insatiable; its stability depends on the degree of personal elimination a given group of people is capable of tolerating – tyranny is nothing but the perversion of human dependence.

For the Tyrant, the party, and the market there can be no genuine moment of difference. There is indeed utility, dependence, and imputation, as Lukács sometimes puts it, but all of these may co-exist with utter indifference to other people and their situations.

The socialist tradition, specifically in its Marxist form, carries within itself the perversion of hope as a social virtue. The concern Marx often expressed with the entropic tendency any revolutionary movement is bound to experience degenerated into the brutality of Bolshevism. But the Bolshevistic movement was no different than many other revolutionary movements. The brutal actuality of elimination – that in the case of Marxism owes its root to the psychological and anthropological reductionism of Feuerbach – is the fight or flight response of any ideology that has no established tradition – it is nothing but its despair for legitimate power.

This sort of protective reflex is not absent from any liberal democratic society; plainly, because power is necessarily an element of any political society. And so, in the end, the achievement of the *great society* depends on the allocation of power, as well as on the avoidance of power in the service of evil – *power is for protecting the good*.

Revolutionary thought and action despairs for the Aristotelian initial position. It self-establishes its epistemic privilege, or its historical *Archimedean lever*, in order to legitimize its use of violence in bringing about a farcical initial point from which to build a new society. If Leo Strauss is right and the Rousseauian state of nature, from which evil is wholly absent, is in fact the beginning of a crisis in natural right, the modern tyrant is the heir of this crisis. The epistemic privilege of the modern Tyrant,

his existence as a *singular tantum* is the annihilation of humility before God, and finally before all others. And it is, also, and perhaps more dangerously the transference of an intuition about the vocation of a species into the vocation of single man; while the very idea of *laissez-faire* is the removal of the tyrant while maintaining the absence of vindication, and hence, ultimately waiving responsibility for the active realization of the vocation of man.

Recourse to these theological notions should not be understood as harboring an *animus dogmatizandi*. That theological concepts are unavoidable in the correct appreciation of the concept of power is widely accepted, as is the subsidiary question regarding the nature of mankind (regarding the radical nature of evil in any given personality). For example, here is Guy Debord's understanding of the same problem: "Philosophy is at once the power of alienated thought and the thought of alienated power, and as such it is has never been able to emancipate itself from theology."[101] Of course, like many other Marxist intellectuals, he continues the opposition to theology in far simpler terms than Marx himself did: the annihilation of humility, the annihilation of God, is also the annihilation of the possibility to tell the history of mankind as the history of guilt (the impossibility of men to seriously stand before each other and confess). Debord retains the Hegelian need of a philosophy of history, but not its purpose.

Furthermore, Debord's notion of a *spectacular society*, a totalistic image of accumulated capital, perpetuates the supposed constitutive blindness of the working class. The sort of blindness only the Marxist critic, as a pure mediator of the authority of Marx's theory, can cure. The effects of class situation, the possibility of a social accusation and vindication are once again *trivialized*. In this particular point, Debord is no different from Lukács, although their readings of alienation serve different purposes: Debord is interested in the pathological condition of those who possess a *false consciousness* of their own situation in society, Lukács on the other hand wishes to uphold a form of dependence upon a paternalistic authority; both theories dispense any form of dialogue by reifying the mind of their interlocutors, that is, by dispensing with the sort of moral psychology I wish to address next.

[101] *The Society of the Spectacle,* §20.

In this form of trivialization lurks an anti-democratic desire – a desire for a violent break, the very opposite of reconciliation.

Teleological thinking has to be the inheritor of history; it cannot conceal it: We have to recognize, that we are, within history, at a point where we have come *too late* to stop many injustices. From our position within history we can't but mourn the past use of power.

In what follows I wish to offer an interpretation of a teleological form that includes the idea of reconciliation as well as the idea of an aspiration for the vocation of man.

On how one should live and one's outlook on life

83. The ambition of any political project ought to be the establishment justice. The ambition of any political philosophy is to apprehend the difficulties of such a project. Political philosophy, being philosophy, cannot savagely abstract from what it actually finds in the world – the point of departure for political philosophy is the actual world.

This may be expressed in this simpler form: the actual imperfect degree of justice in the world is an object of investigation for political philosophy, and the causes of such imperfection will, very likely, tell us something about those for whom political philosophy is thought – namely for man.

84. Aristotle set out in his ethics to give an outline of a human good. His inquiry demands a particular kind of student, one that knows not to fall back on his feelings when choosing his actions. This student has to possess some experience derived from action; he has to know the difficulties that come with choosing; he has to be able to learn from his actions. These conditions emerge quite naturally; after all, the study of ethics is a contribution to the content of a rational principle of action.

This Aristotelian idea of an addressee for political thinking is perfectly sensible, although it represents a limit case – we are considering a student. Rousseau, on the other hand, proposed to speak frankly and directly to man, or in his own qualification, to what he found to be man suffering from a particular disease. The

history of civil societies is a way to study the history of human diseases, he maintained, and Rousseau intends to speak[102] to men in such societies.

Now, the question that arises is relative to the pertinence of the sickness. We are no longer considering a student, he who has to be capable of reflexively apprehending a contrast between his feelings and reason; we are considering men who have been befallen by a particular disease.

The intricate connection between the history of civil society and the history of diseases raises a thought about their interaction. The men to whom both Aristotle and Rousseau speak are within history, and from within history, justice may very well be absent. This precise thought led Engels to compose a catalogue of the diseases suffered by a group of men in a particular place at a particular time, and it led Marxist theory to address a particular class – the proletariat – as the visible expression of such diseases, or alternatively, as the visible absence of humanity.

There is a difficult problem here: to address a class is quite different from simply describing the condition that class is suffering from at present; and to suffer can here only mean to suffer as men and women do. It is unlikely that the proletariat, as a class, could be as exemplar as the Aristotelian student, and it certainly does not occupy an initial position where it is to receive moral knowledge. Marx was correct about the moral salience of these particular men as an object of inquiry for political philosophy. Marx was right that it were these particular men, those who suffer injustice, who constituted the point of departure for political philosophy. But Marx could not exclusively address the proletariat, contrary to what was to become a dominant part of the history of Marxist thought; Marx himself knew that you could not choose, and certainly not invent, your listeners.

85. The identification of the causes of injustice demands a particular form of inquiry. But such an inquiry is hopeless if it is not to set an end. This particular end admits a generic expression – the abolition of injustice.

In the absence of perfect justice, the people we acknowledge stand in reciprocal relations to each other. This might not be at all clear to them. They might be, in various degrees, indifferent to such a fact, as well as ignorant of the moral salience of this fact. As individuals, with an individual self-consciousness, they are in

[102] *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,* p. 7.

possession of a particular world of action. This is a world that expands and contracts to include others and certain sections of an environment, but it does not follow that as individuals they have to possess a moral judgment concerning their necessary interaction. A fact such as this may come to them as a *revelation*.

Merleau-Ponty denied that history is formed by a series of juxtaposed self-consciousnesses; his denial is an anticipation of the moral fact Marxist theory intends to reveal. But is the metaphysical assumption about this form of dependence, and coextensively of history as the expression of such social dependence, a solution to the reality of injustice? If we moved towards a theory of a collective mind, for example, if we believed in such theory, we would be constructing a metaphysical shift – a shift that would most likely hold little significance for those who, in the immediacy of their existence, experience burdens that can only be experienced individually. A collective mind could hardly be indifferent to its own working, but people are indifferent to each other.

Like many other images at work in political philosophy, the idea of a collective mind is a metaphysical metaphor and it increasingly cancels out sections of our common experience the more elaborate it becomes. In the extreme, this canceling eliminates a central problem of moral philosophy: it eliminates individuals and with it the relation of reciprocity they hold with respect to each other – it eliminates how they can become each other's ends.

Aristotle apprehended this difficulty. His ethics presents the idea of acquisition as the progressive illumination of the importance of morality for a person, as the revelation of the place and importance of morals in one's life. To learn how to be virtuous is necessarily an individual enterprise, although it could not be carried out in complete solitude.

This is one characteristic aspect of virtue, its all-encompassing aspect, the fact that it offers a guiding principle for other activities any given person might endorse such as activities where this person is not the sole participant. Therefore, the teleology of becoming virtuous is applicable to a group of people. It designates a form of activity that is not restricted to one individual, but expands to a higher end – to gain knowledge of a good for a community.

The virtuous person inherits the end about the abolition of injustice. As an element of the teleology of becoming virtuous, this end sets a personal demand; and given the all-encompassing character of virtue as an end, this person could hardly be

indifferent to this end without being indifferent towards virtue altogether. Hence, the expression of a good to be realized is recalled by the reply to the question *'How ought I to live?'*

86. As an element of political science, the search for such a good implies two related problems: What is the nature of the contrast between the form of activity designated by the teleological principle of virtue and an existing society, and what is the outlook of actual persons experiencing such a contrast?

The first question presupposes the possibility of occupying a critical stance, assuming the truism that there is no historical discontinuity between the result of such an inquiry and actual political activity. This critical stance is located inside an actual society, which raises the question of a possible transition, or alternatively, that no transition is required. Of course, to assume that no transition is required is the tacit assumption that there are no impediments to adopting such moral principles, or at least none that would require reflection, for example, on the *reproduction* of a form of activity that already exists. But the stance that dispenses with any sort of reflection amounts to a tacit assertion of the full realization of justice. This is the case unless, of course, it is a form of indifference – *the possibility of indifference belongs to our inquiry*.

Marx and Engels described a distinct moment where the conditions under which people actualize their relations with each other, continuous with their self-activity, assume the aspect of an accidental fetter.[103] This idea reveals the burden of historical continuity – the inheritance of a form of activity that owes its stable reproduction to agents who continue their self-activity even though they do not identify with that activity any longer. But the weight of this historical continuity does not downplay the moral importance of the realization. Marx and Engels are neither simply making history, nor are they simply considering an automatic response certain individuals have to a historical and material setting. The recognition of these fetters is the result of apprehending the damaging effect of this particular kind of continuity to the realization of an Aristotelian *human good*.

Marx and Engels' argument makes a point of differentiating between the conditions of possibility of this self-activity, which is between a historically inherited

[103] *The German Ideology*, p. 91.

condition and as a result of a certain form of activity. For the individual experiencing this contradiction, a fact about his relation with others becomes manifest; this is a fact that concerns the production of his material-life, now under the problematic aspect of this relation between him and others. It becomes apparent how his actions can reproduce, both for him and others, the unjust past into the future.

In this sense, any appeal to the use of these Marxist concepts in the understanding of a putative contradiction between individuals and their conditions of life will have to address the importance of this realization as a moral thought. And this implies a revision of some of the central concepts that operate in Marxist theory, e.g. the proletariat. The position from which an inquiry of virtue is undertaken, to shed light on the notion of *how one ought to live* one's life can be realized, cannot abstract from the conditions under which this investigation is made. In this sense, moral thought is situated here, and relevantly so.

But the element of succession in time and the inheritance of a particular form of activity reveal another problem. It is not clear that, for example, and to use Aristotelian terms, advancement in a craft benefits from the study and consideration of an activity in the same way as an inquiry about the nature of virtue does. If the thesis of historical materialism can easily quote examples of transitions inside specific crafts – following the Aristotelian idea that the improvement of a craft follows the inherent tendency of a craft to its perfection – it cannot as easily show what has to be in position to make the sort of transition that would not reproduce any degree of injustice. The thesis of historical materialism cannot show advancement, that is, without any substantial account of the present implications of moral thought on individuals. The historical model can describe the spontaneous progression inside a craft, which makes the previous forms irrelevant, but this model cannot explain as a simple succession within the reflective stance any individual has towards his situation in society. This type of explanation has a limit that resides in its lack of content; it can describe a succession meaningfully, but the stability of a just society is not merely a matter of being any member of a continuum, and neither is it simply a matter of finding oneself in a particular historical setting.

87. Historical materialism inherited Aristotelian teleology, but how so exactly? There is an important difference here; it puts a significant amount of confidence in the historically justified emergence of a new form of society. But Marx

attributed no autonomy to history *itself*: "History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends."[104] This phrase has to be properly interpreted. It counteracts a course of argument that would endow history with an autonomous power. And it makes apparent that both periodization and historical succession carry, as explanations of events, a reductive danger. Marx's critical task attaches to a present point in time, and it cannot, as we have said, leave out the present conditions it encounters. The historical consideration is a support for the critical task, in the sense that the consideration of the proletariat as a class is a historical consideration. The Aristotelian element is revealed in the assumption that underlays the concept of *reproduction*; it is revealed in the thought that history has failed the realization of a human good, and that it might continue to do so.

Now the following question becomes pressing: does virtue and the adoption of its precepts necessarily exhibit a progressive aspect? Marx and Engels mention in *The German Ideology* a qualitative difference in understanding throughout generations, a constitutive blindness that comes with being in a particular historical moment. But if it is somehow obvious that the mistakes of the past generations are more easily accessible to the present ones, it does not follow that any generation would be in the position of realizing perfect history. This does not reduce the importance of an assessment of past history, but it should also not obliterate an important feature of an inquiry into both virtue and political thinking, namely, that it exhibits a reiterative character.

88. How can I be virtuous if I do not exist? – How can I be a Marxist if I do not exist? In what follows, I wish to show that this question cannot easily be formulated from within a certain kind of orthodox Marxism. Of course, this is in no way the same as saying that this question does not assume an imperative importance for such theories. Rather, and as I will attempt to show in my reading of Lukács, these theories succumb under the pressure this question exerts. That is, these theories tend to gesture towards a form of political-eliminativism as a solution. This particular problem is condensed in contentions regarding the concept of class-consciousness.

[104] As quoted by Merleau-Ponty in *Humanism and Terror*, p.16.

Class-consciousness is formed by the distortion of the good for a political community

89. Let us consider the *Capital* as establishing an *intellectual milieu*, where a representation of the actual world is considered. Let us also think of this representation as harboring a special concern for a *totality*. What is the function of this particular concept?

This concept supports the structural ambition of the descriptive task. The immediacy of a description of the various features of a political community – consumption, production, and exchange – exhibits the reproduction of that political community. It is clear that any society will have to reproduce its conditions of stability into the future, but how this is possible? In the end, what this totality (which is to say an imagined political community) critically establishes is how any immediate mode of action resonates with a good to be achieved (in this case a politically just good).

Lukács warned that reference to a *totality* should not be imaged as an *unmediated datum of thought* or the elaboration of a sort of inverted idealistic picture. Such a problem can be avoided if we conceive of the critical aspect as something that attaches to a description of intentional actions. The medium of the totality described is what people, who belong to a given society, *do*.

The force of a critique that aims at the reproduction of a given society – the assertion that it is not a *just* society and not reproduced as one – lies within the recognition that the concept of *totality* is mediated by the description of a particular mode of life, that is expressed by a contemporary mode of acting. This particular notion of activity appeals to the existing relations between people. Its starting point is concrete activity itself. The fact that these reciprocal relations appear in a reified form, and that this generates an impediment to the transformation of a society through activity, implies an account of how this *totality* and its reciprocal relations between people, could possibly light up to an individual. This is not simply a question of a change in a metaphysical perspective – these relations are not fixed but are *to be* fixed or are *being* fixed.

If the possibility of *praxis* is to be generated by the distortion of one's outlook on life – as Lukács suggests – and it cannot be comprehended as a mere *residue*. The possibility of transformation in thought cannot gain its content only from existing reified relations; *praxis* can only be grasped by an individual person, provided that

this very person is capable of vindicating the previous conception of *praxis* that has been distorted. This sort vindication is far from a residue: it is not something as trivial as a feeling.

Considering that it is not an *unmediated datum of thought*, the description of a *totality* of relations within in a society are to be contrasted with a good to be achieved. Of course, the question that arises is relative to the explicit character of this political good; or, if it is politically (in a constitution, for example), then we ask how actual it is in practice. The complex structure of Faith that Hegel puts forward mirrors our difficulty to the extent that it represents the possibility of a conception of a good that is not fully explicit, but is nonetheless expressible.

90. Lukács's concern is a programmatic one; there is a tacit assumption within his concern about the concept of class-consciousness that is dangerously eliminative, in the personal sense. It imposes a restriction on the concept of alienation. Lukács substitutes this concept for his concept of reification, on the assumption that a reified consciousness is an inert consciousness. It is true that Marx's reading of the concept of alienation does aim at capturing the putative de-humanizing effect of one's immediacy. But this use of the concept cannot be cut off from its larger context; it cannot miss out on Marx's repositioning of the point of departure for political philosophy.

The moral significance of an inert consciousness is the idea of a mob in need of elucidation. The acquisition of *class-consciousness* is, in this particular view, to reveal a form of *dependence*. The inert consciousness is incapable of vindicating the distortion of its moral aspirations without the aid of a particular theory. Now, the *unmediated datum of thought* conception of a totality assumes a necessity that may be quite alien to the expressive needs of those belonging to a class. There is a dangerous implication to this idea – it aims to elucidate this mob about its power, about its power as a mass in a certain position. This is far from the notion of spontaneous understanding by a class of its position in society, and this form of dependence (a society that depends on a specific class) cannot stand without undergoing a critique.

Marxist critique customarily refers to how a consideration about such a conception of the good – conceived as a moral insight by a given individual – misunderstands the position of an individual in civil society. Hence, Lukács

paraphrases the tenth thesis on Feuerbach[105] as a reading of the difficulties Hegel had in reconciling the moral insight and action of an individual. The argument presupposes the superiority of class-consciousness, and within this superiority resides an optimism for class-consciousness to effectively change a society. But if the theoretical mythology that portrays the structure of actual society to be immutable is a failure to understand human existence, can this not be *shown* to be the case?

Hegel argued that it could be shown. His argument was based on the vindication of a moral insight in the face of a threatening opponent, which is illustrated in the clash between Enlightenment and Faith. The outcome of this clash is a corrected *self-image* made by each of the opponents. We have to understand an advertence against the idea of *terror* in Hegel's dialogical conception of a culture; or, alternatively, we have to uphold the value of preserving the possibility of genuine disagreement about the ends of a particular political community. The concepts developed within Marxist critical theory harbor an *animus* that excludes the bourgeoisie as a putative audience. An elucidation of the *totality* of social relations within a given society aims at instigating the resilience of the proletariat. But it cannot discount the moral value of any organic manifestation of *class-consciousness* that exists outside of it and is not subservient to the mediation of a party.

But at this point the work of the Marxist critic stumbles upon an internal tension: Lukács's task consists in *showing* not *telling* the proletariat what their position is. In the absence of a consideration of the eliminativism inherent to the theory of reification, the difference between *showing* and *telling* in this case is imperceptible.

91. I mentioned earlier the difficulty that comes with trying to understand what legitimate power is. This question gains its pertinence from a number of assumptions; most importantly, we have to understand how the thesis that a particular class becomes the mediator of a given political conception is not coextensive with the idea that this class is formed by individuals who exist *as* one and *exclusively* for the service of a historical mission. It is no surprise that Marx himself had to dispel the supposed powers of history. The supposed historical task entrusted upon the

[105] see Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach.*

proletariat cannot be modeled on a simple transfer of power, i.e. comparable to electricity passing through a wire.

A mediator for a given political conception is distinct from an individual who endorses a political conception. A mediator does not inherit power in the same way one inherits property. And the actions of the proletariat do not possess a different measure than the actions of other members of society – *power cannot be separated from morality without terror*.

92. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* captures the existence of a virtuous agent in its attempt to achieve integrity, a path that seems to have no parallel within Marxist theory. This calls for a demand of a proper revision. The concept of class-consciousness has to be rethought independently of its eliminativistic element.

I propose we think about both Marx's position in *On the Jewish Question* and Engels's on *The Condition of the Working Class in England* as a way of understanding both the pretensions of elucidation and, in Engels's case, the curious ambiguity with respect to the audience of his book.

Marx very much doubted that the category of political emancipation required the emancipation of one's beliefs as a Jew, and coextensively very much doubted the proposition that political emancipation is located at a higher order of political understanding – as this is an expression of doubt relative to the possibility of a privileged epistemological position.

His contention with Bauer focuses on the illicit implication between having to abandon one's beliefs as a Jew and full participation in a political community. Contrary to this idea, Marx holds that participation reveals the content of particular rights as applied to a community (for example, the right to religion), which offers a contrast to Bauer's conception of religion as a privilege. The idea of a privilege is designed to bring out the inessentiality of a religious conception of the world and its marginal place in the constitution of a society. Instead, Marx's critique gives expression to a democratic impulse: to conceive of the content of a right as yielding the very possibility of a state that does not compromise the integrity of individuals, which includes, of course, their beliefs.[106]

[106] 'On the Jewish Question' in *Early Writings,* p. 225.

Marx does not assume any incompatibility between religious beliefs and political participation; neither does he ignore that the root of democracy is dependent upon the human foundation of Christianity – here he makes the connection apparent that exists between the right to religion and the constitution of the democratic state. This is not merely a historical argument, but an assessment of the concept of participation as one that has already been instanced by those who hold particular religious beliefs (we simply cannot ignore History). The democratic state cannot oppose religion as such, and it can only be *intolerant* towards particular religions; this generates a tension within Bauer's notion of a privilege. The Jewish citizen's demand for the freedom to exercise his religion is not a demand for a privilege, but rather it is the demand for a right that is granted to other believers as free citizens – it is the right to be reciprocally recognized in the exercise of one's religious dignity.

The notion of a *privilege of faith* assumes that the vindication of a right to exercise one's conviction is a manifestation of a cognitive incapacity. Bauer's contrast between the *privilege of faith* and the *universal rights of men* postulates a qualitative shift within human political consciousness, where emancipation is the means for this shift. There is a shared assumption between Bauer and Lukács, which is the assumption that only people of a certain kind can understand certain moral conceptions. They differ only in their ideas regarding what sort of people these people have to be. Bauer believes in emancipation as an active principle for the achievement of genuinely universal moral understanding; Lukács believes in emancipation as the passive effect of a class situation once the damaging effects of reification have been removed.

But what is the qualitative transition a human consciousness undergoes when emancipated? Bauer's argument would only have any pertinence if he were capable of designating a distortion of some kind in the notion of participation. But his argument loses its grip precisely because, as Marx argues, what he understands as participation is a notion that has no content, except that it ought to be different from the actual notion of political participation. In Marx's argument we find a valuable insight for a critique of Marxism itself – it is illicit to imagine that the recipients of the universal rights of people could be constructed by emancipation. And more importantly, the ability to receive these rights is contingent upon these people being other than themselves.

The idea that Religion is an impediment to the achievement of a just society has, for Marx, some intelligibility, only insofar as it postulates the idea of men outside the actual world. And in this respect, Marx was as wrong as Bauer and Rousseau. But his argument does not rest on the idea of a constitutive incapacity to understand the moral salience of a social fact. His argument rests on the danger of a loss of self, a form of transference of one's spontaneity to something other. His argument is, at heart, the identification of the problem of elimination; it rests on a lack of consideration for a religious mind, assuming a form of transference where it would have found an active principle. It is nonetheless in association with the concept of activity that the problem of religion appears.[107]

On the notion of social accusation

93. In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels puts into question how the way we understand the moral salience of a social fact depends on a privileged position. At the beginning of his book we find a dedication. The work is dedicated to the Working classes; the book's intent is to put the conditions in which these classes live before the eyes of Engels' German countrymen. In the book we find descriptions of how these people build their houses, what they eat, and what they dress. These descriptions are ordered by a principle of relevance as they are expressions of the actual economic relations among people. Engels's descriptions *show* us a moral fact as a totality.

It is doubtful that Engels's book would possess any informative value for the working classes themselves; this is not to say that a faithful picture of you, or something you do, is not important for yourself. It is, of course, very important. But Engels declares that his intent is wider than giving an assessment of their situation back to the working classes; like many other books, Engels's book was written for someone other than the people to whom it was dedicated.

94. *Class-consciousness* is tied to the particular situation someone finds themselves in, and constitutively so. But the correct apprehension of a social fact, the moral precepts put forward by an individual as a member of a class will concern all

[107] *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,* pp. 326-327.

others in a society – the insights of class-consciousness are asserted as a plural concern.

Understood as blindness caused by ideology, the notion of an epistemological privilege refracts any possible illumination of a moral fact. The existence of ideology does not preclude the Marxist theorist from presenting the moral relevance of the facts in a way that is conducive to a plural understanding.[108] Engels plainly asserted that his subject was not an exclusive problem of the workers.[109] But the point of his argument is not restricted to the scope of his concern; it extends to the implications of the actions of these workers. Engels expressed an important moral concern here, and is one we should understand as a *Marxist demand*: it is wrong to exercise any kind of revenge upon individuals.

This expression – *revenge upon individuals* – is difficult. The difficulty lies in the formulation of a fair accusation, in formulating a just accusation of those responsible for the reproduction of injustice. What is this particular type of accusation? The concept of accusation depends on the identification of an intention; so why is there a particular difficulty in the formulation of such a kind of accusation? The condemnation of revenge is dependent on how it affects individuals, but can there be any revenge that is not against individuals? Is revenge against a class morally less condemnable?

Engels' condemnation of revenge is an expression of a moral prohibition, but his thought designates a particular addressee. "It does not occur to any communist"[110] to take revenge on any individual – the attitude of the bourgeoisie is reconsidered, the crime of revenge is against an individual not a class, and therefore, not more justified if said to be against a individual *because* of his membership to a class.

It is impossible to understand Engels's difficulty without understanding its Aristotelian roots. The description of his book assumes the Aristotelian point of view with respect to the connection between politics and morals and is presented thus with urgency. And as such, it carries the Aristotelian concern that opens his discussion of political justice – *it is possible to do injustice without thereby being unjust*.[111]

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[108] 'The end of ideology and the end of the end of ideology' in *Against the Self-Images of the Age,* p. 9.
[109] *The Conditions of the Working Class in England,* pp. 301-302.
[110] *The Conditions of the Working Class in England,* pp. 301-302.
[111] *Nicomachean Ethics,* p. 77, 1134a.

Aristotle was taking into consideration the relations of reciprocity qualified as political relations; therefore these relations are not only the form of reciprocity exhibited by the just person, but by a politically just person. The weight of this qualification is revealed by the complex notion of a pardon. Pardon is dependent on the assessment of what is voluntary in the consideration of an action. But it is not exhausted by this distinction. Given the necessary historical continuation of a political community, the notion of resentment is, in many cases, present in the life of many communities. Resentment is caused by the absence of recognition. It is a moral sentiment that qualifies pardon and it may survive the communal recognition of a given moral rule. It may even survive its institution and protection as a law.

It survives as the relevant past of the community, as the knowledge that at one point, that very community exerted its power against some of its members. And it is through a history of the concrete use of power inside a political community that authority receives its moral aspect. The continuity one has with one's community is in the presence of resentment often expressed as continuity only with those who suffered the same injustices; the concept is then substituted by a form of loyalty – in this situation the expression 'we' gains a clear contour.

This form of fragmentation obliges us to reconsider the problem of the attribution of authority. Pardon implies forgiveness if it is to restore the *spirit of trust*[112] inside a political community. And perhaps this is the only way people have to recognize the authority of a community when it does not have a just past. Hegel saw this difficulty clearly; he recognized the tendency to postulate a primitive community as a symbol of the morally disruptive effect this has for an actual political community. The authority of a community cannot be founded on a lie about its constitution. If a community substitutes the history of its concrete use of power for a mythical picture of the past, it does nothing but trivialize the foundation of its existence and, coextensively, it trivializes the existence of its members and their loyalties. The continued existence of the community loses its connection with its real past, making its present an achievement that cannot be justly attributed to those who deserve it. Alienation can start by way of a specific form of communal denial – a denial that does not recognize the members of its community, both past and present.

[112] I am taking this expression from Robert Brandom.

95. Let us return to our notion of accusation. We have first to recover a particular difficulty about intentional action. This problem lies in the contrast between intended and unintended consequences of an action.

Although the injustice of a society is imputed to the individual actions that reproduce it, it would be inconsistent to accuse individuals of directly intending to harm others by their banal economic action. In the face of this problem, Engels is forced to drop the Marxist animus, declaring that no one can believe that a single bourgeois can act otherwise. His statement is, again, difficult. Engels means of course to identify the infrastructure of society as the particular impediment to individual action. Nevertheless, it is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that it is in a moral context that this problem is raised. There are, in this context, important differences between the situation of social bondage common to both workers and the bourgeoisie. The descriptions of the bondage experienced and lived by the proletarians do present a different sort of condition. Apprehended by a reciprocal mode of thought, this sort of bondage manifests a kind of urgency given the scope of its extension.

Engels's descriptions range from manners of brick laying in house construction to crime.[113] The span of his interest is necessary for apprehending the form of life these people have. The dwelling of this particular class reveals the all-encompassing exhaustion of their way of life. What the mode of construction of the houses these people inhabit reveals is precisely a stance towards their outlook on life: the inability to build a stable place that offers their dwelling the individual dignity humans aspire to. The men and women in Engels's book do not, properly speaking, *dwell*, but simply rest.

96. We can now understand Engels's phrase "Communism is a question of humanity and not of workers alone" as carrying a sort of collective demand. But to understand this demand we have to return to Aristotle's notion of pardon. Once we qualified the notion of pardon as implying a peculiar political problematic, we can now better understand Aristotle's notion of involuntary. The sort of accusation we are considering does not attach itself to individual actions. The sort of accusation we are

[113] *The Conditions of the Working Class in England,* p. 70, p. 126.

considering concerns the indifference a political community might exhibit towards some of its members.

Once a moral fact is presented as a way to vindicate a particular class, that very political community reaches a point of no return. We find ourselves before a collective expression of the morality of that community; a vindication that presents the stable existence of that community as unjustly impinging on some. Indifference may spring from ignorance. But once it is directed towards the vindication of a class, it assumes the moral aspect of violence. Ignorance can be pardoned, but not indifference, as an act of knowledge and power.

The sort of demand Engels presents stands in an antagonistic position to the idea of an epistemic privilege. It does not however stand against what inspired his dedicatory to the workers – namely, the importance of an organization within the working class that aims at the preservation of the resilience of the workers as oppressed members of a society. Engels does voice his Hegelian impulse when alluding to the necessity of conquering any brutal element in a revolution. This is an impulse that amounts to hope in the possible revelation that springs from the knowledge of history (e.g. the experience of the French will not have been in vain). His expression springs, perhaps, from the anxiety attached to the fact that a class war may very well deteriorate into an unjust war.

This is the moral motive behind Lukács's argument, and we have to address his argument with a view to disentangle what he taught as an honest requirement for the achievement of a society that is deprived of injustice, from the dangers of a theory that postulates epistemological privileges. We are also obliged to take Kołakowski's contention seriously, where the epistemic privilege of a class deteriorated, for the sake of practical purposes, into the privileged sight of a tyrant.[114]

Class-Consciousness as moral participation and Class-Consciousness as a program

97. Lukács's reference to the epistemic privilege of the working-class makes use of a constitutive contrast between the ideological character of the bourgeoisie and the ideal position of the proletariat to understand the totality of social relations that are formed under capitalism.

[114] *The Main Currents of Marxism, The Breakdown,* p. 1012.

Let us focus first on the question relative to how the transformation of society is dependent on the acquisition of a set of beliefs. The functionality of class-consciousness seems to reside in its power to affect society at once. Lukács is certain that in virtue of their position within society – by being the patients of the crimes of this very society – the proletariat will recognize the reproduction of the totality of social relations as an impediment to the achievement of their political emancipation. But in the face of an actual reified consciousness, in the immediate existence of the proletariat – the subject of his essay – Lukács is forced to recognize that the burden of a proper elucidation falls on the shoulders of the Marxist critic.

This puts the problem in a different light. *Prima facie*, if a reader of Lukács's critique can understand the moral salience that the concepts are designed to outline, then the vindication of an epistemological privilege becomes illicit. Even if we blame the existence of ideology for concealing obvious injustice, our blame would not merely be justified by an appeal to interest – interest is merely immediate, just as appeal to sympathy is inessential.

Thus, the connection Hegel saw between legitimate power and the integrity of individuals is replicated by Marxist theory in the attempt to make sense of class-consciousness. Since, the effectiveness it might achieve has to avoid the threat of circumstantial opportunism, it is not at all clear how we should conceive of the relation of dependence between theorist and the proletariat. The idea of opportunism is the expression of a moral requirement, but there is the peculiar political danger in making this moral requirement a mere external concern or making it into a mere reflection on which the guiding conception of Marxism one should follow. This sort of procedure circles the content of the theory, but it leaves out the individuals who constitute the proletariat – I am not suggesting a nominalist interpretation of the proletariat; it is precisely the importance of their shared concerns that we have to understand.

98. This problem emerges in Lukács's text when the contrast between the generation of a psychological state and the generation of real class-consciousness becomes revealing. The immediate character of what Lukács calls a psychological state is, even if not trivial, conceived as an obstacle to the apprehension of the *totality* that is made possible by critical theory. But when we assert that this psychological state is not trivial, we conceal the difficulty of this assertion.

The notion of psychological state throws some light on Lukács's pair of concepts: *crude empiricism* and *utopianism*. Crude empiricism cannot be characterized simply as the generation of a residue in the consciousness of an individual without trivializing the actual psychological state. And this psychological state cannot possibly gain its contrastive force – with genuine self-consciousness of membership to a class – through an appeal to a dependence on the external elucidation of a theorist. Either alternative reduces the moral character of the distortion felt by an individual existence to blind feeling or intellectual dependence. And this reduction eliminates the individuals who constitute a class, those who exhibit the moral quality of identifying with each other, who are capable of sharing an adversity.

There is a distinctive problem if we consider the *self-knowledge* of a particular member of the proletariat to be no more than the expression of a *false-consciousness,* as long as its object – the totality of capitalistic social relation – is not correctly apprehended.[115] This, of course, is what characterizes the qualitative shift from a moral self-consciousness to a revolutionary one. And it is central to Lukács's qualification of the concept of class-consciousness as *practical*.[116]

The mediated knowledge of the totality of social relations sets a program. It is this programmatic aspect of his argument that generates the dependence of any percept of social justice upon a theoretician. But let us outline the moral implication of his qualification. The concept of class-consciousness is, in its practical aspect, transformative of the immediate conditions of the proletariat's life. It is equally transformative with respect to the outlook these members of society have on life. It is precisely on the conflation of these two conceptions that Lukács's orthodox critique relies on its very opposition to vulgar forms of Marxism. We are able to discern the teleological aspect of class-consciousness and the emergence of a program for action in Lukács's critique. But is the emergence of this program automatic?

The notion that the epistemological conflict amongst members of the proletariat is real, is completely absent from Lukács's thought. This conflict may be summarized in a simple principle: *We may agree with the root of the problem, but not with the solution.*

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[115] *History and Class-Consciousness,* pp. 167-168.
[116] *History and Class-Consciousness,* p. 205.

Lukács's theory carries the burden of having to explain the formation of a total coincidence of aims amongst the individuals who belong to the proletariat. The programmatic aspect is directly derived from surpassing the immediacy that constituted an impediment. There is no hint that alienation might befall the revolutionary movement in relation to itself. To put it plainly, the privilege of the proletariat consists in a form of self-knowledge, which reveals a program, and this program goes beyond its historical setting – it gives it *an aspiration for the transformation of society in its totality*.[117] But disagreement about aims inside the proletariat is easily conceivable. Certain considerations that pertain to the morality of means, for example, might emerge as incompatible with the beliefs of these individuals. It does not follow that one's socialism necessarily supervenes upon one's Christianity in all actions. The acquisition of both beliefs, and the significance of these beliefs for particular individuals, putatively demands a resolution that is not as simple as a compromise.

This idea cannot lie outside of Marxist theory. When Lukács argues that the fact that class-consciousness has no psychological reality does not imply that it is unreal;[118] he cannot simply formulate this proposition without considering the condition under which such a form of consciousness could be formed. After all, the danger that has to be philosophically addressed is present as the substitution of the consciousness of the class for that of the Bolshevik party. To address the conditions under which real individuals form consciousness of their class is to address the moral salience of the simple conflation of class-consciousness and party.

At this stage, Lukács's argument confronts the limit of political philosophy that Bolshevism tried to remove. The explanation of the concept of alienation, simply in terms of a form of immediacy, loses sight of the idea that such a revelation, such an aspiration for the transformation of society in its totality, cannot simply be class-specific; the moral dimension of alienation is lost. There is no thought as to the particular attachments these individuals, who belong to the proletariat, might have to other things besides the revolution. For this reason there is no measure for the sacrifice endured by the remoter end of a just society. Aspiration is not always unconditional, and alienation is not simply the form of an imposed *day-to-day* by a

[117] *History and Class-Consciousness,* pp.174-175.
[118] *History and Class-Consciousness,* p. 75.

capitalistic social organization. Humans develop allegiances even in adverse circumstances and are afraid for quite understandable reasons.

But as I said before, we have to maintain the moral element in Lukács's theory – namely, the resilience of those who are oppressed and the moral vindications these persons are entitled to. Simultaneously, we have to detach this idea from the theory of a privileged epistemological position on the grounds of the political danger it represents. But there is the accusation Lukács makes, that this generates a species of vulgar Marxism, a species that does not ultimately order all events to the ultimate goal of closing the gap between the *psychological consciousness of the proletariat and the one imputed to them.*[119]

99. The idea of imputation in this context is very difficult. It assumes at least that what is imputed cannot merely be distinct from what is being trivialized as psychological. What can be imputed does not constitute a perfect mediation – one that exists in immutable conditions in Marxist theory. What can be imputed has to be revealed as crucial for those it is imputed to. To close the gap between what is assumed to be two types of consciousness often relies on a simple solution, which is to remove the analysis of immediate circumstances. As a follower of Lukács, Debord embarked therefore on the consideration of environmental planning and the structure of time in human work as pertinent considerations for Marxist theory.

These matters are far from frivolous, but I want to suggest that it is a tendency of Marxist theory to turn on the idea of immediacy as the exclusive impediment to the lack of association between actual people and theory. The structure of immediacy as the particular empirical circumstances of workers is relevant as a form of deliberation for the construction of a shared mode of life of a community. Debord reflects on the material conditions that are part of a putative *outlook on life* ascribed to every individual in a community. The consideration of time reveals, for example, the clash between time as personal development and time necessary for work.[120] The reconstruction of the material setting of a society harbors, in Debord's theory, the explicit Hegelian concern of having to set out the conditions for the needs of social organization.[121] Both considerations about the structuring and re-structuring of society

[119] *History and Class-Consciousness,* p. 74.
[120] *The Society of the Spectacle*, §148-151.
[121] *The Society of the Spectacle*, §179.

express Debord's concern for what he calls the pervasive attempt to *everywhere restructure society without community.*[122] The material setting of a community, and the structure of its time, is responsible for the reproduction of the reification of social relations. But in order to restructure society, we must understand community as a moral principle, and value and preserve its internal relationships. The optimism we find in Marxism may tend to fasten on to purely external considerations – *time* and *space* – but the interpretation of the material conditions of the world demands that our materialism be qualified; it cannot simply be a form of empiricism. The absence of alienation does not follow simply from a change of scenery – the change of space and the re-structuring of time.

100. The limit of an imputed consciousness is the limit of political philosophy. A previous problem returns here. Lukács's position runs the danger of trivializing spontaneous organization of class-consciousness just because it serves an immediate interest and not an ultimate idea. This is a problem that Marx himself addressed in his critique of Bauer in *The Holy Family*. As an extension of his critique of Bauer's emancipatory ambitions, Marx recognized a danger in the formulation of a concept such as that of a *mass* to refer to the unorganized individuals in a given political community. The mass appears as the trivialization of individuals and therefore as the incapacity of these individuals to participate in history – in this case theory has estranged itself from historical reality.

But Marx's argument against Bauer is difficult. Bauer's formulation of an opposition between *Spirit* and *mass* is designed to assure the critical superiority of *Spirit*. This sort of distancing leads to an abstract conception of history, one that ultimately exists in opposition to real history, just as a supposed total human emancipation exists in contrast to actual religious persons.[123]

Marx's critique aims at the idea that spirit embodies an ultimate plan that finds in the Mass an enemy (this is Marx's own term) – here we get closer to an understanding of the philosophical foundation of the party as the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. But Marx is unable to prescind from the critical element that attaches to reading historical events as having political significance. The argument of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* consists partially in the apprehension of the alienation that

[122] *The Society of the Spectacle*, §192.
[123] *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*, pp. 111-117.

plagues the revolutionary movement itself – the ghosts of the past.[124] There is a describable difference between the farcical revolution and the revolution of the proletariat. The difficulty that Marx's argument has to dispel is not about the formulation of this difference, but rather about the limit the argument reveals – a limit that disappears the minute political theory becomes fully autonomous.

The difference between the philosophy of Bauer and Marx resides in the fact that Bauer conferred autonomy to theory by trivializing the history that theory could not absorb. On the one hand, Bauer made historical progress into an archetype and therefore situated it outside of the world by contrasting it with real history. Marx, on the other hand, tries to understand the alienation of the revolutionary movement as non-trivialized historical participation – Bauer's *spirit* is outside the world, and Marx's *alienation* is within the world.

Lukács situates the reality of his concept of class-consciousness precisely at this point of the text of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*.[125] But his demand that a revolutionary movement cannot be defined solemnly against that which it rises against requires the sense of a future community. In the end, the argument of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* only historically situates revolutionary interest in the context of *class-war*. And the horizon of a philosophical conception of a political community is made hard to understand by Lukács' demand of perfection:

> The proletariat only perfects itself by annihilating and transcending itself, by creating the classless society through the successful conclusion of its own class struggle. The struggle for this society, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is merely a phase, is not just a battle waged against an external enemy, the bourgeoisie. It is equally the struggle of the proletariat against itself.[126]

What we find at the end of both arguments is the conclusion that it all boils down to *enemies*. The moral demand Lukács presents is the culmination of an extreme form of eliminativism – annihilation – expressed as the condition for the emergence of a new kind of person capable of creating a new historical society; compromise is to acquire the fixity of an imputed consciousness. The imputation relies on the revelation of a moral idea. The abolition of enmity is the abolition of *class-struggle*, but for a future political community this putative exercise of power is

[124] *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 11-13.
[125] *History and Class-Consciousness,* p. 76.
[126] *History and Class-Consciousness,* p. 80.

not without repercussions; the abolition of class-struggle is not the abolition of resentment.

History and Enmity: Revelation as the limit of political philosophy

101. The vision of history presented in the *Manifesto* contradicts Marxist optimism – the inevitability of class struggle as the motor of history.[127]

The existence of enemies is an impediment to a society beyond any form of class injustice; it represents the persistence of human evil directed at society itself. The formulation of this idea necessitates a moral consideration that is beyond the theory of historical materialism. Plainly, the theory cannot contain any such political community because there has not been one.

Marx's theory does not deny genuine political participation to any revolutionary movement on this basis. He does not ignore any previous revolution as a real historical force, however crude or misunderstood it might have been about itself. The story told in the *Brumaire* is precisely the analysis of the disintegration of a common project. The farcical reversal, where the power of a class became the power of an individual without authority, is made possible by the existence of enmity held by a majority to whom recognition had been denied.[128] For Marxist theory, Marx's historical insight points in the direction of a reconsideration of the argument about the conflation of party and class-consciousness, and ultimately to the problematic conflation of party and tyrant.

The genesis of the *Bauernreligion* resides in the conditions of the bourgeoisie in society.[129] This accusation elicits some of the differences Marx purported to bring out in the *Holy Family*. The accusation is relative to the reciprocity between both classes; it was their indifference that permitted the final resolution by one class to stand behind a tyrant who spoke for their interest. The accusation that the masses supporting Bonaparte suffer from stupidity is nothing but the expression of a lack of moral insight by the bourgeoisie. In the absence of recognition, authority gave way to the simple seizing of power. And the same machinery that allows for the possibility that a class may seize power, also allows for power to be seized by one individual.

[127] *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, p. 13.
[128] *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, p. 116.
[129] *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, p. 121.

People *made history under definite conditions,* indeed; the story told in the *Brumaire* is the story of enmity.

In the *Holy Family* the personification of history is considered as an attempt to save the existence of theory.[130] Proofs provide the nutrition for theory, and history is nothing but proofs. But we have to understand that the text of the *Holy Family* provides a partial critique of historical materialism. The difficulty resides in the comprehension of how a political community is not supposed to reproduce its mode of life into the future if its mode of life is an unjust one. But the elaboration of an Archimedean point, such as the one described in the *German Ideology*, does not remove what seems to be a further limit to the adoption of precepts of justice – namely that it should be *revealed* to the members of a political community that they can no longer act with indifference towards each other. Moral truths cannot only exist in theory; they ought to become the practice of actual political communities.

An Archimedean point like this one has in fact often enough been confused with a complete moral and political legitimacy. The underlying thought behind both the Jacobinian *Reign of Terror* and the Bolshevik terror was that they were carried out by the generation capable of realizing perfect history, capable of making history according to one single plan held by one faction and valuable enough to be put into practice at any cost – and this is the danger of belief in a privileged sight.

Marxism aspires to a form of society that necessitates the rehabilitation of hope as a social virtue;[131] it expresses the idea that what is a moral precept of its critique will inspire the allegiance of all members for a future political community. The form of historical idealism Marx criticizes in Bauer contains the idea that the achievement of any kind of genuine political community demands that it completely break with the past – which is to break with the beliefs of people. It is internal to subsequent forms of Marxism to suppose that history thus far is merely the history enmity, but the genuine difficulty resides in the preservation of Marxist optimism. If the only condition of a classless society is the emergence of a subject of a new metaphysical kind – fully emancipated, without history nor any allegiances – then the future seems to be the future of enmity.

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[130] *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*, p. 107.
[131] I am taking this expression from Alasdair MacIntyre's *Marxism and Christianity*. In my reading, this phrase condenses the argument of this difficult book.

This form of discontinuity can be described as a form of religious thought, as having the strength of revelation. But I want to argue that there is a fundamental difference between a formulation of revelation as something that completely breaks with history, a demand inherent to some Marxist theories, and revelation as reconciliation.

102. Reconciliation cannot morally ignore its past and it cannot start by ignoring the history of the use of violence as power. From the Marxist perspective it cannot ignore the class society from which it springs, just as most political communities cannot ignore the violence that is attached to their founding moments (the military uniform as a symbol of a nation – the military parade as a celebration of the foundation of a nation).

The problem of a putative transition to socialism cannot avoid the moral problem of the future co-existence of what are simply deemed as enemies in Marxist theory, namely individuals who pertain to different classes. The thought that a socialist revolution creates a generation of people plagued by resentment inside that very political community is something wholly absent from Marxist thinking. In Marxist thinking, the notion of a transition assumes that it will spontaneously generate a stable community that recognizes the authority of those who motivated the transition itself.

History has shown that this is not the case. The optimism of Marxism cannot be purchased simply by *imposition* and *compromise*.

The optimism Marxism contains can only be expressed as a religious idea. When we remove this connotation, Marxism becomes enlightened as a science and loses its human face. History becomes deterministic and the proof for the need of subjective intervention made by individuals who conflate class-consciousness with themselves. The society Marxists aspire to implies the abolition of enmity, and the abolition of enmity is the absence of indifference. The concept of *class*, and hence of *class-struggle*, is not simply an element pertaining to Marxist theory; it does not simply serve a functional role inside of the theory. The historical observation of the *Manifesto* carries a moral problem for political philosophy, one that it cannot solve in theory. It is a problem, nonetheless, that it is *obliged* to formulate.

Marx maintained that the *Phenomenology* showed *the elements of a true description of human relations*.[132] We have to understand the concepts involved in such a description, since the content of the idea of *revelation* resides here. Marx himself recognized the religious element I mentioned before. Subsequently, Marxist thought removed all of the Hegelian substratum and with it the possibility of understanding the religious element present in all political thinking – be it in Marx, problematically; in Hegel, explicitly; or in Rousseau, unavoidably.

103. Aristotle made the concept of community depend on the all-encompassing idea of a political community. The exercises of virtue should be directed at preserving friendship inside a political community and therefore secure the possibility of other more local communities the ability to function.[133] As I suggested before, Aristotle was acquainted with the concept of alienation inside a political community. But his ethics mirror the initial position the ideal student is in – we find hardly a thought concerning the recovery of the *telos* of virtue or the continuous threats to that *telos.* This is an idea that greatly concerns both the Hegelian agent, who has to align himself with virtue and therefore with others, and the Marxist who perceives the alienating dangers of property in both power and wealth.

The confrontation of power and wealth

104. When we reflect on an individual's *outlook on life*, and this is an individual who is situated in the actual world, this implies that we reflect on the concepts of wealth and power as things that condition his freedom.

The formulation of an accusation made by a class is precisely the vindication of shared beliefs; it is a vindication that the existence of more than one individual has been frustrated in the same way. But membership to this class is not necessary for the ineligibility of this vindication. Even if we grant that ideological considerations illuminate certain beliefs in a distorting way, or even leave them in the shadow, there is a conceivable threshold with respect to how far such ideological considerations can extend. Just like solipsism misconstrues the nature of mental phenomena, ideology misconstrues the nature of morality.

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[132] *The Holy Family,* p. 255.
[133] *Nicomachean Ethics,* pp. 129-131, 1160a.

105. The underlying insight this problem offers, which is the opposition Lukács portrays, is precisely how the actual world distorts a good to be realized and how it becomes a source of future content for that conception – how a mistake demands correction.

To assert that a given mistake affects *some* is not coextensive with the assertion that it is *not* a problem for all.

Therefore, it is inconceivable that one could trivialize class-consciousness by reducing its insights to membership or to the circumstances of the problems felt by a particular class. Morality is asserted in the face of a real world, and the formation of class-consciousness is intelligible as the distortion of equality and freedom brought about by the actions of individuals as members of a society. The vindications of a class are made from the point of view of a political community as a cooperative form of existence.

A vindication of the morality by members of a political community presumes the recovery by these of their activities; the self-conscious addressing of a mode of life in the form of a just sharing of profits or ownership of the means of production. Through this, a real conception of the good, and not a warped one, comes to light.

106. For Hegel, self-consciousness is an inherently moral notion. It represents the point of view of people have when they are capable of learning from their actions, sharing a mode of life and vindicating their beliefs. But this position is one that finds an initial opponent in the *way of the world*. The regimented practices of the world force arguments from virtue to confront qualified forms of naturalism and utility.

The resolution that the confrontation between power and wealth is supposed to aspire would be unintelligible without the notion of a putative self-conscious agent. If the critique presented in the *Capital* has significance for anyone at all, it will be for a self-conscious agent who understands the realization of freedom and the dissociation of culture to be morally problematic – *a capitalist with a Hegelian self-consciousness*.

Immersion in an actual world implies that individuals will have *non-trivial* moral problems derived from their situation and class. The power of actual conditions to determine one's outlook on the future is a problem that is political in nature, as long as the effective exercise of coercive power by a state is conceived as the performance of a task directed at a particular people. There is a moral significance to being left out of those for whom this task is performed, as there is to having one's

condition diminished by how oneself and others can legitimately act. But the root of the difficulty emerges as soon as we understand the connection between the justification of state power in relation to its addressees and the implications this has on the positive freedom of individuals.[134]

Hegel purported to *show* how the explanation of the genesis of state power was not necessarily contemporaneous with the genesis of its legitimate functioning. Contrary to Lukács's contention, Hegel did not stop at the *isolated individual in civil society*. He did not stop there precisely because he considered morality as something established only after the existing society permitted individuals to have integrity through the formation of a *Sittlichkeit*. *Equality*, as a problem, only emerges once society grants the recognition of individuals. Hence, morality becomes the *practice of autonomy*; the description of dissociation we find in the chapter on culture in the *Phenomenology* is the apprehension of this peculiar demand. Integrity demands the *reiterated* reconsideration of one's society.

Dissociation starts with the loss of one's faith in the principles responsible for the formation of one's society – Hegel puts this in the chapter on culture in the pregnant form of a denial of certain principles as the justification of one's action, in the context of confrontation between Faith and Enlightenment – but it does not exclude the recovery of one's allegiances.

We can avoid the problem of allegiance only if we put forward a theory that appeals to a form of individualism justified on extrinsic principles. This theory would rely on a different picture of what persons are and desire.

[134] 'Sources of the Authority of the State,' pp. 134, and 154-155 in *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, Collected Philosophical Papers Volume III.

7. Reciprocity

The appeal to a self-image of men

107. For Hegel, the appeal "*be for yourselves* what you all are *in yourselves* – reasonable" was the problematic expression of the *self-image* of Enlightenment, portrayed as a claim about people in general.

The appeal assumes that equality is defined as a shared common trait, a capacity to be reasonable. But this particular conception of equality is reductive in character; it is a naturalized version of equality. It trivializes both the existence of inequality and the particular achievement of equality as recognition.

The appeal springs from the necessity to find a connection between how the actions of individuals are determined. Enlightenment enters into a dialectic here precisely because of its claim for a determined nature of action. Faith opposes Enlightenment because the latter proposes that the determination to act should be a positive consideration dictated by what is actually useful. In this way, utility avoids the derivation of its content from an archetype and grounds its justification for action on the emergence of shared needs; there is nothing beyond what has been perfectly realized, nor any postulation of a source of action that is not strictly contained in the simple idea of men.

This represents an appeal to an extrinsic justification of the notion of reasonableness. The extrinsic conception of *utility* and this particular form of naturalism go hand in hand. Utility is justified by guiding the effectiveness of certain actions. Actions from utility are justified by a belief that these actions will promote the common good as a consequence. Any worry about cognitive gain, in the consideration of the forms of action peculiar to a society, is rendered unnecessary. What lies beneath this form of naturalism is an assumption about the prospective guarantee that the promotion of the good is achievable on an extrinsic and automatic basis.

Hegel's concern is both recuperative and explanatory. It springs from the understanding that a demand for a justification becomes pressing for any given age

and that any such justification will be bound to recover a genuine sense of what it is to act with dignity. The arrival at the notion of utility represents, therefore, a genuine *gain* for spirit. Pure insight, when differentiated from the authority of a culture – from a reified result of its own productive power – is put under the stress in order to arrive at a justification for this very culture. Insight is put under stress to achieve the self-conscious return from alienation, that is, to justify the achievement of conditions for the stability of this mode of life.

Hegel wants to trace his steps toward the realization that the dignity of humanity implies a self-image of itself. The dialectic of Enlightenment is itself nothing more than the struggle for a conception of what it is to be human under the threat of alienation. As a philosophical topic, the question pertaining to the dignity of a particular self-image assumes a dialogical form in the *Phenomenology*.

108. This dialogue starts with the avowal of some contrasting conceptions by both participants. We cannot lose sight of what unites these contrasting conceptions. We cannot miss the reason why Hegel suggests that this dialogue was bound to have a mutually corrective effect on both positions. At this point, Hegel's argument requires caution; there is as much truth in the mutual accusations of both participants as there is an inherent failure to apprehend what is substantial in both of these positions.

Hegel dramatizes such an encounter as an encounter between the crystallization of the pure insight of an age and an individual who professes faith. Of course, it is not an accident that the opponent an entire age encounters is a generic individual acting out of conviction. This is simply the reenactment of the inherent difficulty Enlightenment feels when it puts forward its image of mankind, and its difficulty with having its authority recognized, which is the only way it can come to enjoy a genuine conferral of power.

It was out of such an anxiety for acceptance that Rousseau supposed that a pure civil profession of faith could be demanded of a person. The content of this profession of faith should be determined by the sovereign and both religious beliefs and social conscience should coincide. But the notion of *Sittlichkeit* does not survive this kind of imposition; it owes its actuality to an achievement. A fundamental element in Hegel's political philosophy is that that imposition directly undermines the notion of *revelation*. This notion, which represents the greatest difficulty for the generation of a just political community, cannot be abstracted into political theorizing

without a moral cost. In Rousseau's philosophy of the *Social Contract,* when this happens it explicitly incites violence. Faith contains the tranquility of the understanding of where the limit of political philosophy lies. But it does not, as of yet, have an answer as to the moral actualization of this understanding.

The Rousseauian imposition represents the recognition that the content of Faith contains a more powerful element. It recognizes that faith is not merely reducible to a fantastic representation of another world or to the fetishistic endowment of objects in this world with otherworldly powers. Its power relies on the truth to which the allegiance of individuals aspires. This is an allegiance that is grounded on the conviction these very individuals hold with respect to how much their faith is worth, both as an object of reverence and as a reason that guides their actions.

But is the self-image of Enlightenment reconcilable with this desire to have an analog of the intrinsic mechanism of faith? The entire structure of the criticism that Enlightenment exerts upon faith removes this very possibility. The object of faith as pure certainty – be it the certainty in Christ's actions as the doings of unimpeded good within history or in the certainty that God secures all that is good – does not rely on certainty for insight. Enlightenment accuses faith of not achieving any relevant knowledge in its worship, of having an abstract object as the grounds for its hopes – as Hegel puts it, Enlightenment's first achievement in its encounter with Faith was to *pollute* the certainty of its object.[135]

This exerts an unavoidable power over the mind of the believer, especially because, if this accusation is true, then the believer acts on the basis of a mistake. The believer cannot maintain that his conviction springs from ignorance. The believer cannot avoid the accusation; he cannot trivialize his own self-image before another, he cannot because he cannot trivialize that in which he believes. It is the believer's *trust* that Enlightenment envies and puts under suspicion.

Rousseau did aspire to insert what was a certainty in an unquestioned civil unity in this very link. The exercise of conviction in the name of faith is both the possibility condition of Enlightenment's critique and its aspiration.

109. We find an expression of how much Enlightenment yearns for this religious conviction at the very end of the *Social Contract*: "If anyone, after having

[135] See *Phenomenology of Spirit,* §572.

publicly acknowledged these same dogmas, behaves as if he did not believe in them, then let him be put to death, for he has committed the greatest crime, that of lying before the law."[136] In this assertion we do not find the slightest possibility for repentance. It is a strange moment for the reader when this passage seems to fold back on itself, like the two sides of a sheet of paper, back to the chapter on the *right of the strongest*.

The underlying difference between faith and civil religion has to be understood as a difference of content, but also as difference in the manner in which people profess their beliefs. Enlightenment presumes to have discovered the self-image that is most true for persons – the very rigorous search for truth that causes such an impression on faith –, an image that relies on nothing more than its own powers and allegiance to the possibilities of its own powers.

We should not ignore how Hegel's argument absorbs the Rousseauian concern. The idea of a civil religion is but the anticipation of the threat of alienation. But what is presented in Rousseau under a historical guise as the historical birth of Christianity, assumes in Hegel the moral significance that deserves a consideration as to its internal structure within the history of *Spirit*. With internal perspective I mean only the precise explanation of what the object of faith represents *for the believer*. Rousseau's argument exhibits a strange form of dependency. In the end of the *Social Contract*, we find the principles expounded there to be ordered to the necessity of a civil religion. This ordering expresses, to a certain degree, the lack of autonomy in political thought.

Of course civil religion is unspecific; it does not exhibit the content of any particular creed, but in the enumeration of its articles we find compromise and devotion as acts of a self-constituting individual – as acts of someone who is *becoming* a citizen. In the end, an unspecified theistic figure is subjugated in association with the sanctity of the social contract; Rousseau's civil religion is an attempt to determine the object of faith. It is a move of abstraction that aims to retain the authority of a theistic figure without any of the content of a given creed.

But we find something irreconcilable in the process of this determination. The attempt to determine the object of civil religion should stay strictly within the

[136] *Social Contract,* p. 186.

boundaries of *public utility*.[137] In this respect both Rousseau and Marx are in agreement: the specificity of the religious beliefs should not constitute an obstacle to political participation. But on the one hand, Marx hoped that the clarification of politics *as* theology would bring people to the revelation that the reciprocal social relations they share with one another signify an undisputed moral demand. Rousseau, on the other hand, tried to artificially recreate religious certainty and devotion as a genuine political *sentiment*.

Hegel saw that this artificiality could hardly fix the problem Rousseau started with. The historical occurrence of Christianity represents a point in the history of *Spirit*, a point the *Phenomenology* gravitates toward, as containing the conditions of genuine reciprocity that is explained as trust and forgiveness. The starting point for Hegel is the self-consciousness of the believer – the problematic self-constitution of the believer expressed as the acquisition of virtue and the demands of life according to virtue:

Freedom is therefore situated.

110. It is in the context of the *culture* chapter of the *Phenomenology* that we first encounter the Hegelian thought about the association of freedom with self-constitution. In the argument that follows, I want to suggest that this implies a reconsideration of Aristotle's notion of *acquisition of virtue*, as well as the proper consideration of freedom in the context of political participation. The first idea is but the revision of what seems to be unacceptable to us now in Aristotle's naturalism; the second idea amounts to the danger we find perfected in the historical intervention of various revolutionary movements. Hegel found the second idea in the French Revolution, and we subsequently found it in our moral assessment of the history of Marxism where *terror* is annihilation in the name of a rational principle – it is an expression of discontinuity justified as an *absolute foundational moment.*

The main philosophical mistake of the Enlightenment resides in its incompetence to truthfully apprehend actions from faith. What it perceives as detachment from this world, or *the burying of true worship in empty ceremonials*, condenses the genuine concern of the believer for this world – it is the expression of active engagement in communal practice.

[137] *Social Contract,* p. 185.

Hegel apprehended that to the content of faith belongs also the imperfection of the actual world.[138] The mind of the believer, through its actions, is not moving into a self-contained domain; it contains the believer as the believer is in this very world – as a sinner. And in this world the believer's concern can only unfold from him to others, as much from genuine desire for the welfare of others as from the believer's own failure to have helped others when it should have. Actions from faith are as much endowed with reverence as they are entangled with the inescapable individual concerns of the believers. Prayer is not merely exaltation, nor is confession merely subjugation. The former is also desire constrained by reason, confessed fear and hope for that which is not wholly within the power of one's will; the latter sets a task. This represents the genuine content of faith, and we can now already discern a self-image of individuals coming to light. This image implies one's imperfection, plagued by the possibility of an ever-occurring demand for perfection. And here we find a further complication: this image involves some instability, insofar as one of the ideas primitive to it – *the ever-occurring* – resists an immediate formulation. It resists a completed formulation, one that stands legitimately without reference to something that is not finitely given. As Hegel puts it in *Glauben und Wissen*: – the poetry of Protestant grief becomes the prose of satisfaction.[139]

111. The religious image of men necessarily implies a distant reconciliation. And Hegel, already in *Glauben und Wissen*, recognized that the programmatic aspect of the *finite* in Kant's philosophy resulted from this concept assuming a fixed point in the culture from which Kant's philosophy emerged. The reconciliation of men with an image of itself has to begin closer to home. It has to begin with a critique of the cognitive faculties, and the description of a palpable moral psychology, rather than with an aspiration for reconciliation. But we can see the force of Hegel's critical preoccupation only in the figure of faith in the *culture* chapter of the *Phenomenology*. It is here that the program of the Enlightenment meets its failure precisely by inducing the *alienation* of its addressees.

This appears firstly in the form of scorn for the rejection faith makes to let this finite principle guide its actions. We witness the purely negative attitude of faith from

[138] *Phenomenology,* §549.
[139] *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 61.

the place where Enlightenment derives of its accusation. This accusation threatens to reduce the moral worth of faith's rejection to an attitude of *dissemblance*.

Enlightenment posits *utility* as a central concept in the explanation of the content of a self-image of individuals. This *utility* contains the explanation of the concept of individual as someone capable of holding property and searching for necessary possessions and enjoyment; this partially forms the grounds for the notion of *reasonableness* Enlightenment appeals to. And Enlightenment regards the purely negative attitude faith is capable of as merely a foolish action. Faith rejects the enjoyment of property, the holding of possessions, and the enjoyment of pleasure.[140] It rejects both the possibility to retain an individual itself as an individual in civil society and as a mere *species-being*.

The significance of this rejection lies not merely in the apprehension of the determinants of action. This contention implies the proper understanding of a *moral psychology*. Faith's rejection of the enjoyment of pleasure puts forward a self-image of individuals that is associated with transcending its mere *species-membership*. This occupies a space within any conception of moral psychology as a thought about the possibility of *self-constitution*, even if this idea is regarded as problematic. A notion, such as that of *incentive,* is not regarded merely as something that fuels a moral psychology. Instead, the suggestibility of men to incentives carries significance for the constitution of a self-image Faith is working towards an image that is less exultant about both the finite aspect of cognition and *absolute freedom*.

The identification with one's moral psychology as a requirement

112. What is the consequence of reading the existence of a moral psychology as something that springs from a religious concern?

Hegel is certain that philosophical reflection stumbles on this very problem when it has to cope with the difficulty of justifying identification with something beyond individuality. The appeal to *reasonableness* tries to make individuals aware of their own capacity in the service of moral action, and this is perhaps the root of Rousseauian self-reverence. But the very elaboration of a moral psychology as self-directed reflection arrives at an insight that points beyond the conclusions of finitude: reconciliation aspires to a movement from *a given* to *a task*.

[140] *Phenomenology,* §556.

If we are to be able to give an explanation of such notions as *aspiration, forgiveness, charity and confession*, our moral psychology has to relevantly apprehend the nexus between rationality and the acquisition of beliefs in a given community.

The reason why Hegel locates the analysis of this insight within the conflict surrounding the apprehension of a proper self-image follows from the fact that the image put forward by Enlightenment is already reconciliatory. Thoughts about self-constitution emerge as necessary elements of the Enlightenment's own conception of self-constitution (e.g. in Kant these are the derivable duties to improve oneself, and in Rousseau it is an act of will to become something of a new metaphysical kind, i.e. a citizen).

As I have said before, Hegel saw a distinct problem in the appeal of Enlightenment: the very idea of an appeal to a self-image expresses the desire to counteract the presence of alienation. The discussion then becomes one about what the source of this reconciliation should be.

113. The question at this stage is how to understand a form of agency that has its source in a self-constituting principle. The self-image Enlightenment puts forward concerns *the vocation of mankind*. The violence contained in Rousseau's thinking is a symptom that the self-image put forward meets with resistance; it does not have the force of *self-evidence*. The perennial problem of political philosophy concerns its capacity to reveal the need of reconciliation as the genuine *vocation of mankind*. Alienation is a threatening force to the constitution of a society, precisely because it is embedded in the concept of human action – reconciled agents do appear, upon philosophical reflection, as the genuine condition of realized justice.

Hegel recognized in philosophical reflection two distinct ideas that run the risk of being conflated. In *Faith and Knowledge* he characterizes these ideas as distinct philosophical tasks:

> Philosophy is not supposed to present the idea of man, but the abstract concept of an empirical mankind all tangled up in limitations, and to stay immovably impaled on the stake of the sensuous – either analyzing its own abstraction or entirely abandoning it in the fashion of the sentimental *bel*

> *esprit* – philosophy is supposed to prettify itself with the surface color of the super-sensuous by pointing, in faith, to something higher.[141]

The difference between an idea of man and an empirical mankind elucidates the sort of shift between an appeal and the emergence of a moral psychology – *what man is and how men are*.

Hegel is of course interested in the necessity of pointing to faith. But Hegel's distinction is not merely reducible to a critique of the attempt to construct an all-encompassing picture of mankind – even though he thinks that this sort of project is an abstractive violence with no practical truth. Hegel, instead, is sure that the emergence of a moral psychology, which attaches to a given individual, posits a conception of *freedom* that requires a detailed treatment.

Instead of a postulation of reason or a form of collective will, in the *Phenomenology* we find the notions of *confession* and *sacrifice*. These two notions do not override the importance of being capable of denying action on incentives, nor the capacity to ally one's will with the formation of a general will. On the contrary, the *Phenomenology* treats moral action and allegiance to one's community as things that are threatened by the action of *those very* individuals who belong to such a community. Freedom appears therefore *situated*[142] and philosophical reflection is forced to admit that it not only points to faith, but that some of its crucial ideas spring from faith itself – the content of an *idea of man* expresses faith in the apprehension of a universally valid moral principal.

114. Individuals actualize themselves through their actions, and as such they have to be apprehended as situated individuals; it is as individuals that they sacrifice something for something worthy or confess their individual faults. Philosophy expresses faith when the impediment to the realization of justice is removed, namely the alienation of oneself and one's community.

Any putative *outlook on life* depends in equal measure on the *situatedness* of a given person and the degree to which this person has been able to realize their *outlook on life.* And this person's failure to do so may have various sources, such as their society or the person themselves. Individually, the identification of an agent with their

[141] *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 65.
[142] This term is Taylor's, *Hegel*, p. 563.

own moral psychology is a requirement insofar as it is necessary for any agent to have a moral existence that is connected to their intentional acting.

115. The genuine difference between "the idea of men" and "an empirical mankind" resides in the distinction between constructing the place of morals in human life from the *inside*, rather than from an external perspective, especially if we recognize a threat to this external perspective – the reduction of moral persons to dispositional make-ups, with no other qualification.

Sensitivity to this issue runs through the entire *culture* chapter of the *Phenomenology*, although it would be wrong to fully identify this perspective on morals with the figure of faith still at very early stage. Eventually, as it progresses, spirit will apprehend the act of *confession* as the genuine understanding of both virtue and freedom. And the argument is incomplete until we understand how this moral resolution is to function as the genuine source of political reconciliation – the *wider* implication of moral action derived from Aristotle.

116. Whatever the account of agency we favor, this preference is not exempt from explaining the wider implications that the Aristotelian picture of agency entails. Hegel's efforts are directed towards bringing to light such a picture, a feature of the formative aspect of the *Phenomenology*.

Every account of agency put forward by a philosopher has to make clear the implications their concept of action has for humans – the very form of action we study. Theoretically, to designate *action* as a property of empirical mankind simply fails to relevantly address the internal perspective I am considering. From the perspective of agents, instrumental reasoning is the condition of their actuality, the condition of their achievement, and failure. Deliberation is the source of their aspirations and shame. The idea of man consists in recovering what would constitute pointing to a recognizable explanation of morality.

Hegel's attempt at a moral psychology is then an exemplification of what morality looks like to an agent who holds a strong image of himself. For the remainder of this essay I shall follow Hegel by not addressing what would be a scientific image of man and morals – although I do not dispute the truthfulness of such an image – nor the justification of first principles (that is, a justification of morality as such).

What emerges instead, the idea of man, is precisely the self-image any honest agent is capable of giving of himself. Moral attitudes appear to him as aspirations, failure, and the feeling of having succumbed, rather than collections of dispositions, both natural and psychological. The place of morals in collective human life is manifested as either something towards which one is indifferent to at times, and at other times regards with enjoyment and respect. These manifestations strike us as having a stark difference from correctly ordered justifications in a system of knowledge.

And yet, the manifest image of morals does not oppose these other pictures; its elaboration is but a claim of its epistemological validity. The universality of morals appears in the *Phenomenology* already at work in the figure of Faith. It issues from an agent who is already acting, an agent who does not occupy the Aristotelian initial position. *Universality* can only claim its validity if the individual can issue a justification as to its practical nature – not that morals simply have the property of being universal, but rather that the universality has to be actualized by the agent individually even if the cost implies the *sacrifice* of individual attitudes or desires. This does not have the validity of justification in a system of knowledge; instead, it brings out the genuine practical context in which morals become manifest.

117. Initially, Faith expresses this human characteristic only negatively. It confronts Enlightenment's principles as being merely extrinsic to the genuine virtuous act. In earnest, Faith, in this context, is sacrifice as a form of *imitation*. But in willing to be free from any trace of pleasure and desire for the possession of objects and the retention of the same, Faith aspires to a condition that is devoid of any stability. Here we discern immediately the terms of Enlightenment's critique: *the thoughts about self-constitution can only be captured positively in a system of duty, or in a genuine civil article of faith*.

Faith has the virtue of having brought to light the genuine problematic that moral psychology attempts to answer. The simple association with property and the enjoyment of pleasure is an unsatisfactory self-image of man. The *prose of enjoyment* is, as a self-image of man, only a glorified platitude. It is the reconciliation as acceptance, and acceptance as avoidance of a recurring problem. *Utility* as a justification for holding property, and retention of the same, lacks an intrinsic principle behind it.

The attitude of the believer may be criticized for having purchased its superior consciousness of purity at the cost of a positive realization of a recognizable, and necessary, stability for human life. But the believer cannot be accused of possessing a *false consciousness*. To be a believer is not simply a matter of believing in ideas that are unintelligible and surviving what is perhaps a mere ideology. If, on the one hand, the truth Enlightenment reveals is contained in the accusation that the believer has failed to understand what he is – *simply a man* – then on the other hand, how does Enlightenment propose to explain the source of a pure intention, necessary for the earnest profession of civil faith?

This entanglement makes another deep-rooted problem apparent. We are now in a position to discern two distinct tendencies within the dialectic of Enlightenment. The first is to associate the justification of all principles with *utility*. The second is expressed by Rousseau's desire for a pure determination of the will similar to that of faith, but without any reverence for anything besides men themselves.

Utility simply avoids the burden of self-reflection – it possesses an assumed purposiveness. Hegel's concern, in the *culture* chapter of the *Phenomenology*, is nevertheless not simply that this absence of principle exhibits instability. On the contrary, it may crystallize what is the official view of a culture where alienation will be unavoidable. In the denial of the believer, we find a refusal to succumb to an alienated culture only in the provisional sense; we find a refusal to let one's actions become purposefully the embodiment of an automatic imperative: *the useful* as individualistically conceived. This form of self-reflection is connected to religious reverence; it is a desire for self-determination that will include others.

Confession as the identification with one's moral psychology and alignment with a shared outlook on life

118. The inclusion of others that we assume above in a desire for self-determination is exemplified by the act of confession, which is a practice of self-reflection in itself. Confession should be understood not as the Catholic sacrament from here on out, but rather as a public profession of faith (although the term will gain its content as I progress with my interpretation).

This practice tacitly assumes the imperfection of the agent who is confessing. But it would be wrong to conceive of the practice of confession as a mere functional element in the generation of an *un-alienated* political community. As a form of

realized morality, confession brings into existence a space where two individuals meet reciprocally. We have to understand how reduction to the merely functional argument obliterates the understanding of the link between an individual moral act and the realization of a just community.

119. Confession entails the first positive realization of faith; it is an intentional act that brings forward the worth of self-reflection in the form of self-assertion. As such, this act reveals one's self-distortion and, as a communicable act, it presupposes its relevance to another. Hegel locates the generation of a just society primarily at the level of an individual achievement. This is primarily at the sight of the removal *self-alienation*. But this form of moral philosophizing carries the burden of both having to explain, in equal measure, the relevance of individual life according to virtue and the formation of a just society.

120. The main idea at work is how reconciliation entails forgiveness. Hegel starts with the idea of a *rejection of continuity* with another and the moral salience of this rejection.

It is in the figure of the *Hard-Heart*[143] that moral certainty and value is asserted – it is asserted as the legitimate denial of recognition. This legitimacy results from no less than the wicked act of the one who confesses. The confessional space does not admit any ambiguity concerning the moral value of an act.

In the confessional act, the radical nature of evil is not merely a presence in the self-consciousness of the confessor's mind, nor is its overt expression mere expression. The confessional space it generates is a form of recognition that demands a task. This task becomes communal continuity. But the position of the *Hard-Heart* is not, in Hegelian terms, exhausted by the explanation of its position in the confessional space. The *Hard-Heart* is, as a bearer of resentment, capable of denying this continuity; the confessional space makes a demand on the *Hard-Heart* – the virtue of charity.

Continuity does not reside in the full identification of both individuals in a relation with one another; they must be able to maintain a reflective-distance from each other, and they do so in the denial of recognition. To be denied recognition is a

[143] *Phenomenology,* §667.

form of exclusion that surpasses one's naturally granted status as a member of a species. To be denied recognition does not, of course, detract from its significance, but it brings into consideration one's power to set oneself to the side through one's own actions. It fundamentally treats personal identity as dependent upon what one does, and as dependent upon what one *has* done; it finds the measure for what one does in the recognition of others; it expresses the wish for continuity with others.

The confessor actualizes the consciousness of his historical continuity as moral continuity. Personal history is, as an act of freedom, recognized as something that demands full moral awareness. And such awareness is something that cannot – contrary to the attempts of the *frenzy of self-conceit* – survive as something fully self-contained. The act of confession makes explicit the wish for recognition as the contrast between personal realized history and moral aspiration.

In the *Phenomenology,* this possibility in the moral life of humans serves not merely as a treatment of the Christian virtue of charity, but also as the final resolution for the concept of freedom – not as *absolute freedom*, but rather as positive freedom in the service of a community. Hegel finds, in the act of confession, the charity that should be extended to those who are putatively outside of a revolutionary faction. This is not of course a requirement that those who live outside a given faction would have to confess to those who do. Instead, Hegel's idea suggests that history ceases to be, *per se*, the history of enmity. Confession serves in the argument as a reminder of *humility*, an indirect way of qualifying the powerful self-satisfaction of self-conceit and self-reverence.

121. The initial denial of recognition by the *Hard-Heart* is wanted by the confessor; it is something that the confessor ought not to avoid. Ultimately the confessor seeks forgiveness, and this forgiveness cannot abstract from the moral determination of a deed that has been done.

The possibility of reconciliation rests therefore on the *Hard-Heart* – if the *Hard-Heart* is able to respect and recognize the moral aspiration of the confessor. Aspiration relies therefore on the author's recognition that *his* evil deed was an exercise of freedom, with *that* particular moral determination. It necessitates the recognition of a past act as morally implicated in his future (the very future that, due to resentment, the *Hard-Heart* is initially incapable of recognizing and therefore incapable of sharing). The conception of an *outlook on life* appears in the act of

confession as sharable and, more importantly, threatened on the level of an individual. The possibility of reconciliation relies precisely in the identification of these individuals with their *outlook on life* and their recognition of the distortion they bring about in their own *outlook.*

On the one hand, the *Hard-Heart* is a protective attitude towards this *outlook on life;* it represents a distinct form of identification with one's moral psychology; it is not recuperative, but fully assertive. On the other hand, the confessor's honest aspiration demands the *Hard-Heart's* charity.

The confessor brings about a moment where this form of recuperation represents an assertion of the same *outlook on life*; the position the confessor occupies is recognizably one of inferiority, but his position is nevertheless not simply one of self-debasement – the dignity of honest aspiration. The *Hard-Heart* is pushed into the position of recognizing the freedom of the confessor as a form of earnestness, as the assertion of the importance of this *outlook on life* as grounds for their co-existence – *the confessor reassures the other of his moral convictions.*

The position of the Hard-Heart*: to identify someone as good or evil and to identify with someone*

122. The reflective distance exhibited by the act of refusal contains the possibility of an individual moral attitude: *blame*. It is not merely a question of rejection of participation in an outlook on life; it is a question of confronting individuals who oppose their individual dignity.

The *Hard-Heart* asserts his moral dignity when scorning the immoral action – *it is something he would never do, something he would have never done*.

The violence of blame relies on the assertion of identity. When we assign blame, we identify *someone as* evil. The individual who is blamed has made himself unrecognizable. He has moved away from a shared conception of morals. What becomes problematic through the reciprocity of confession is the contrast between the present identification and the confessor's earnest moral aspiration. The failure of the *Hard-Heart*, which is the failure to act according to the virtue of charity, is the trivialization of the confessor's repentance and the total exclusion of the confessor from the moral community.

There is a further possibility implied by human morals, one that is contained in *Hard-Heart*'s position. The deed that the *Hard-Heart* blames another for having

done is not necessarily alien to him. It is not necessarily something he would never do, or *has never done*. And the feeling of resentment is not necessarily diminished by this being an act the *Hard-Heart* capable of himself. The fact that the *Hard-Heart identifies with* the other does not make forgiving easier, although in some cases forgiving becomes more fathomable; sacrificing an individual attitude, that of resentment, is still as much a moral demand as in the first case – forgiving is neither dependent on simply identifying someone *as* evil nor on identifying *with* someone.

To identify with someone does, however, reveal a morally important notion, which is the hardship of forgiveness. One may feel repulsed when seeing acts one has done carried out by another, and these might only become fully apparent when we see another person doing them. The *Hard-Heart* may know this position well; he does not have to be the perfectly virtuous agent to sustain the position he has. The *Hard-Heart* may know how hard it must have been for someone to forgive him – he may know this from himself, and from how hard it is for him to forgive others.

The confessional space throws the *Hard-Heart* into this position independently of his particular history. A father who witnesses a flawed action carried out by a son cannot avoid judging the deed because he himself had once done the same. The father cannot trivialize the sense of a shared morality. Nor can he, perhaps, help feeling disappointed, or even resentment, lest he would suppose that there was a previous warning for that particular deed.

123. There is a further position, one where a person cannot avoid perceiving something as utterly *unforgivable*. The notion that something might be unforgivable is a genuine possibility of human life. It does not erase the moral demand nor does it make the *Hard-Heart* ultimately blind to the genuine possibility of the confessor's profession of earnest aspiration. It is, as a possible moral position for individuals as well as nations, something that carries the cost of what Hegel calls continuity. This cost may be overwhelming for persons, and yet they might incur this cost all the same.

124. Confession implies blame, but it is not exhausted by it. There is a particular form of dignity in the vulnerable situation of the confessor. What we find here is an analog to the *fight to death* for recognition. The confessor earnestly risks

his personal identity by placing himself in this particular relation; he offers it up for consideration and knowingly suggests himself to receive blame.

The confessor cannot assert his individual identity without an appeal to the confessed act. But if he confesses, he has no desire to make such an appeal. It is here that we encounter a fundamental difference between confession and shame. The difference is not just one of *quality*. The difference depends on the act of confession being seen as a possibility for authentic recognition. The confessor undergoes the vulnerable position, so as to be recognized in his individual authenticity for better or worse.

To be authentically recognized represents full continuity between individuals. It is more than equality conceived as *educated individuality,*[144] as fully expected instances of the same *Bildung*. It discerns the unessential aspect of *Bildung* that camouflages any authentic position, or is turned into an advantage by someone with enough wit.[145] Educated individuality ironically recognizes the tension between individual existence and one's alignment with a shared *outlook on life*; confession is the reversal of this.

The aspect of an individual moral psychology

125. Educated individuality restricts mere animality and exhibits the characteristic aspect of an *imperfect philosophy*. It explains people through an appeal to a given empirical contrast, but does not trace the consequences of this contrast. Hegel, of course, was certain that whatever moral phenomena was describable, it could not but represent the content of the *idea of men*. This moral phenomena has to be interpreted as the acquisition of virtue.

126. The notion of authenticity may well be the starting point for this reflection. We may begin with the idea of an individually experienced conflict between one's allegiance to authenticity and a demand for education.

There is a position that tries to avoid a putative conflict. The individual who holds this position would have to explain virtue as a completely natural property of that person *as* an individual. And this conception would have to exhibit consistency in all of the individual's actions and intentions. This person would be an authentic moral

[144] See *Phenomenology,* §537.
[145] See *Phenomenology,* §540.

agent, in the unqualified sense of having the concept of morality be naturally coextensive with his individual identity.

In the *Phenomenology* this position appears as a result of a reflexive apprehension one achieves of oneself as an individual; and the capacity to differentiate relevantly between the presence of desires and a moral form of necessitation is what affords this very achievement.[146]

But this difference is experienced, first, as the destruction of one's individuality. Succumbing firstly to an exclusive heteronomic principle, individuality becomes merely the momentary satisfaction of contingent desires. In this succumbing, the moral agent apprehends an idea about necessitation (a heteronomic one, his *fate*) – a notion derived from the thought that one is necessitated – seem entirely outside of the individual himself. The way out is a form of compatibility: this individual has to make himself part of his *fate*; he has to conceive of an autonomous kind of necessitation.

This implies that the individual is in a position to discern tensions between desires and moral necessitation. In one sense, the argument derives from the apprehension of one's moral psychology that is also a qualification for the concept of freedom – freedom can now be seen as an achievement.

But the contrast between the contingency of desire and an autonomous form of necessitation still has a problematic aspect for this individual. The autonomous principle qualifies the notion of *fate*; it inevitably represents an escape from natural necessitation for the individual. But how is the individual existence of a person supposed to integrate autonomous necessitation into its framework?

The essentiality of this question escapes us if we fail to understand that our thinking cannot stop short of accounting for the need of two contrasting forms of necessitation. But it also has to express the need to explain the unity of an individual with the demands of autonomous necessitation. To answer this, Hegel addresses the Kantian thought that freedom has to be presupposed.[147] Nonetheless, he re-interprets Kant's contention that it is insufficient to prove this claim only from human experiences. It would be incorrect to perceive Hegel's re-interpretation as a step back to a popular conception of morality. The concept of freedom, as something *secured* by a proper deduction, is distinct from the history *Spirit* tells about the concept of

[146] See *Phenomenology,* §364.
[147] *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* p. 95.

freedom; but this history the *Spirit* tells is far from the history of empirical morality, say *case by case* – it is the history of freedom as an individual achievement.

The presupposition of freedom cannot dispense with the history of the acquisition of virtue; and for Hegel's confessor, it is this acquisition of virtue that gives content to the presupposition of freedom. The Kantian presupposition of freedom for all creatures with a rational will is indeed generalized, but generalized in the context of a moral psychology. The answerability peculiar to human will, the very form of necessitation studied in moral cognition, gives its differentia to a supposed *perfectly good will.* This *will* may function under objective laws, but is not necessitated *in the same way* as humans are; in the *Phenomenology*, the theme of *self-consciousness* will address not human freedom as such, but the freedom of individuals in their reciprocal relations to others.[148]

Hegel's introduction of the concept of *fate* already makes apparent the problematic realization that an individual will resist his own elimination; an individual feels that they must take a part in what happens to him as an individual person. This demands that the general property of freedom be understood by an individual as all-important for his identity – as an internal good relevant to his existence. The generality of freedom implies of course the ineligibility of its extension, it implies that all rational beings possess it. But this thought does not yet express the particular dignity inherent to it, which is the dignity that comes with actual exercises of freedom. Recognition will entail other individuals as actualizing the law of autonomy in their actions: it will entail them as discrete individuals who can be recognized to be responsible for their acts.

127. The generality of the heteronomic form of necessitation that necessitates us as animals, transitions to a general law that encompasses all rational creatures.

This expresses a *sentiment* that interprets the property of freedom as constitutive of one's individual existence. Hegel's individual separated himself from his desires and realized that something else necessitates him to act, something rooted in him *as* desire.

This is the *law of the heart.* This law represents a wish for the total conflation of one's individuality and one's natural makeup. The heteronomic necessitation made

[148] *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* 4:413.

clear that the movement to satisfy one's desires leaves individuals destitute of any possibility of a shared existence; individuals become the isolated function of their desires. But the autonomous principle induces a certain kind of anxiety; there is now a prospective dimension contained within this principle, one that makes self-determination both a condition of the realization of one's individuality and of a shared existence with others. The *Phenomenology* answers this form of anxiety first by asserting the conviction that an individual is naturally in possession of a moral heart.

128. Individual agency has to be reinterpreted as an exhaustive conflation of the authentic individuality of an agent with an agent who acts on the correct principles simply in virtue of being the individual they are. But, of course, the notion of the *acquisition* of virtue cannot be shaken off in light of this simple demand. To embrace an uncanny form of necessitation seems to be intolerable for the development of this individual who has, at this stage of the history of *Spirit*, already succumbed to this trap at least once. So, *the law of the heart* is the anxious reaction to the experience of having learned precepts of virtue, or of still having to learn them. Virtue should be as general as desire; it should be naturally justified as an element of the existence of every individual and therefore of their shared existence.

The *law of the heart* cannot understand enmity, and therefore it also cannot solve it. It cannot understand the diffuseness of human motive that Kant famously complained about (Kant's complaint was about the authenticity of a moral subject), and it cannot accommodate the notion of acquisition.[149] The fact that moral sentiment does not transition in the same pattern as natural necessitation poses the problem of authentic moral achievement. Now this is to say that the simple divisions of the coward and the hero do not exist; more accurately what we find is the hero who felt tremendous fear, and the man who doubted before he walked towards his *destiny*.

At this stage, we have to pause briefly to remember that to understand the text of the *Phenomenology* is to understand that we are witnessing an individual who retraces the steps of their own moral growth. Hegel revises the matter of the acquisition of virtue as a personal conflict, and all along we are being led to a particular understanding of *alienation*. It will become clear that the threat of

[149] *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* p. 61.

alienation is not simply that of a fall from a state of nature, but rather of a permanent threat to the exercise of virtue.

An excursus: An interpretation of the elements that pertain to the Aristotelian notion of the acquisition of virtue

129. Let us look at the origin of the idea concerning the acquisition of virtue. Aristotle stated the importance of acquisition in his account as differentia of virtue itself. The definition states the contrast between virtue as a result and virtue as arising naturally. *Virtues arises in us neither naturally nor against nature*, but its completion is brought about by habituation.[150] This definition does not yet address the difficulty of the concept of habituation. It simply states morality as permeable to acquisition and active habituation, which is unlike the perfected nature of a stone.

This initial approach does not yet mention the workings of virtue – how the virtuous person proceeds – in order to focus on the apprehension of the quality of this state. However, Aristotle presents an explicit motivation for his definition: virtue as a result of correct habituation can explicitly integrate the teleology of a good political system. This idea represents an insight about the threat of alienation. Aristotle's insistence on the acquisition of virtue foreshadows the necessity of conceiving institutions that will not deteriorate. His argument about individual acquisition makes the demand for sustaining a space, where a shared conception of an *outlook on life* can be actualized, explicit.

130. Aristotle concludes his definition by discerning a *state* the very existence of which entails the indispensability of a teacher and a practice. This brings us to the proceedings of the virtuous person – an account that is not merely descriptive, and certainly not a phenomenology of that very state, but rather an account that discerns a *meaningful incompletion.*[151] This form of incompletion is partially derived from the kind of state that Aristotle defined. The inability to provide *fixed answers* is internal to the account of virtue, given that the acquired state is not independent from a *form of reasoning* and perception of the world. We thus come to an account of a guiding form of reason from necessity. We find in this account a nagging feeling that there is

[150] *Nicomachean Ethics, Book II, 1, p. 18, 1103a.*
[151] *Nicomachean Ethics, Book II, 2, p. 19, 1104a.*

a real difficulty in accounting for particular cases, we are told: "the agents themselves must consider in each case."

This introduces a further demand: we are beyond the characterization of a state and on to the assertion of an essential link between the acquirable state and a particular form of reasoning – this unity is the agent himself. The agent completes an account of virtue through his action. As such, his reasoning is manifested as the active exercise of virtue for virtue's sake.

The *genus* of virtue implies therefore a fundamental reflexive distinction. Aristotle brings this out by considering a fundamental difference between virtuous action and the practice of a craft. Although these two activities share the need of a teacher and some practice, the difference consists in the impossibility of reducing virtuous action to the quality of production; virtuous action implies that the agent be in the right state.

This thought demands a reflexive identification. But what are the effects when we are deprived of this reflexivity? There is, of course, the immediate question of the absence of an underwriting of the virtuous action by an agent; this is idea leads us to natural authenticity. At this stage of the argument we gain insight about the significance of the very absence of this form of reasoning: just imagine someone who is incapable of knowing what she is doing, in contrast with someone that feels some anxiety at the thought of not knowing what to do or if what he is doing is the right thing at all.

Aristotle, nonetheless, plays down the condition of knowing in the case of virtue, which asserts the all-important act of decision and apprehension of this state (that exhibits the quality of being *firm* and *unchanging*). Now, the question that arises is: how to conceive of the apprehension and decision of a state without implying the condition of knowledge?

131. An initial suggestion would be to paraphrase away the knowledge condition as a mere instrumental principle, and then construct an independent deliberative procedure. But this will inevitably reduce the significance of Aristotle's insistence that the frequent *doing* of just and temperate actions is meaningful; it will obliterate the agent's concern for the effectual actualization of such states; and it will do away with the meaningful link between the perception of the world and reasoning towards finding *a way* to realize a good action in the world. How is it possible that the

significance of repeated practice does not satisfy the knowledge condition? What we find in the Aristotelian argument is a further demarcation within the concept of knowledge – what is the relevant *kind* of knowledge. These conclusions can be found in how the preservation of the nexus of perception, habituation, and actualization of the good for a political community is never thought about apart from its effectual existence. Virtue is never abstracted; it is always thought about as e.g. courage and courage as military training and gymnastics.[152]

As said, Aristotle discerns between technical knowledge and moral knowledge without wishing to sever the connection between the stability and actuality of deliberation, which is a necessity in order to maintain a good political system through the learning of certain activities. In this, we discern again that Aristotle is fathoming the threat of alienation. The stability of any practice will not only exhibit agents who embody the instrumental principle (the technical principle); instead, and if we are concerned with *healthy agents*, these agents will also have a critical stance with relation to this practice, as well as a meaningful connection to how the ends (embodied in that practice) are sustained.

132. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* we do not find any explicit definition of alienation, although, as we have said earlier, Aristotle gives us a description of its moral effects. In the *Politics* we find a further approximation to the concept of alienation. The idea of *becoming a vulgar craftsman* is presented as something that should be avoided in virtue of education. Vulgar craftsmen and hired laborers do not qualitatively act in a way that promotes virtue. They are *indifferent* to the unity of practical reasoning; they do the work they do because they are hired, or because they have to, not because of the dignity of that activity. But, of course, so do the children who are being educated, at least initially. This is the problematic area Aristotle tries to discern. The acquisition of virtue is made through education in some activities, and there is an inherent difficulty in transforming the learning of these activities into something self-contained, something not subservient to the teleology of the achievement of virtue. The habituation leading to virtue cannot eliminate a reflexive understanding of the practice; it cannot qualitatively have the same aspect of hired labor. Activity according to virtue has to be, independently of its form – gymnastic, or

[152] *Politics,* Book VIII, chapters 1-3, 1337a – 1338b.

music – done *for* the sake of virtue, for the sake of oneself and one's friends.[153] The acquisition of virtue, therefore, has to contain a qualification upon the acquisition and habituation of states of virtue.

133. Aristotle's introduction of a qualification upon a state demands the understanding of what exactly this qualification can mean for an individual who entertains this very state. These states may gain their differentia from the existence of changing states, such as feelings, but this is still insufficient to account for the *firmness* of the decision. Therefore, there has to be a proper understanding of the concept of *end*, one that affords the ranking that is exhibited in normatively structured activities – seen in the value of the ends that are thought, learned and repeated.

In this, we already discern something unfathomable for the *law of the heart*, since in principle, there can be no relevant normative insight that does not derive directly from an instance of this form of law. To put it plainly, for the *law of the heart* it is sufficient to have a heart and nothing more can be learned from a collective mode of existence, which is to say nothing that is morally relevant can be learned from a collective mode of existence. For the *law of the heart*, the concept of acquisition is a form of pollution. In this we find that it is not merely because one possesses a heart that one is a Christian or a Muslim. In a similar way possessing a certain kind of heart that not prevent one from feeling anxiety before the apprehension of one's identity, a problematic thought, which is a thought that *one has now acquired.*

The aspect of an individual moral psychology, continued

134. Hence, the *law of the heart* is incompatible with both the condition to make decisions and the demand for an unchanging state. The anxiety this agent exhibits derives from having its origins in the reflexive apprehension of being necessitated non-naturally, from the apprehension of his individual destiny that does not have a strictly natural justification.

135. The individual resists his complete elimination, but resists in equal measure the thought that his individual moral worth implies any sort of habituation, practice, education and, in a way, action. It transforms the possession of virtue into a

[153] *Politics,* Book VIII, ch. 2, 1337a, 1337b.

natural non-acquired state. This naturalization of virtue implies its full generalization extended to the species. And it is as a species-member that the *law of the heart* asserts its moral thought. But just as Aristotle distinguished the genus of virtue as something that implies acquisition, the *law of the heart* is incapable of obliterating its own moral psychology (the sort of existence he feels anxious about) – *his individual nature appears to this particular agent differently than his account of the nature of the species*.

136. We are able to overthrow the validity of this form of law through the presence of the individual's own moral psychology, by discerning of a source of perversion of this law within the individual himself.[154] This position is, of course, a critical one and Hegel exploits this situation for at least three separate motives. The self-image of men proposed by the *law of the heart* falls like a deck of cards, and dissolves with it any possibility of an individual moral psychology. But this position also implies the dissolution of a particular conception of alienation, which is the idea that mankind had fallen from a state similar to that exhibited by the *law of the heart* into a corrosive state of sociality – we now know that the source of this perversion lies within the agent himself.

Dissemblance of the consciousness of evil and moral aspiration – self-trivialization

137. The presence of the *evil conscience* starts with the apprehension of the idea of an *impulse*. An impulse is an absolute starting point, a point before there is nothing else, the spring of action in its authenticity.[155] But *impulse* does not exhibit the stability necessary for an exhaustive derivation of the concept of morality. Impulses are too varied, and natural impulses are far from a complete conflation with moral conscience.

Exculpation of natural impulses on grounds of its simple identity is unsatisfactory for a perfected moral conscience. These impulses are, of course, what they are; but these impulses are also putatively in a strong contrast with the person this agent wants to be – they constitute a threat to one's moral aspirations.

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[154] *Phenomenology,* §377.
[155] *Phenomenology,* §622.

Impulses as an absolute beginning are coextensive with absolute personal authenticity. But there is the possibility of discovering an equal worth in moral aspiration. This worth figures as the presence of a moral sentiment embodied in the solitary act of worship.[156] The pure insight of Enlightenment missed the significance of the act of prayer as the apprehension of one's personal identity. Hegel finds within self-consciousness an order to the spontaneity of life as the worship of a divine element present *within* this individual.[157] The solitary act of worship is, simultaneously, the worship of a community as a moral community. The base accusation of dissemblance, the accusation that Faith *as* imitation is meaningless, preempts any comprehension of the content of worship at all. It becomes but the arrogant threat to moral aspiration – the absence of charity.

138. Self-trivialization implies the trivialization of the acquired moral of a community. The worth of acquired virtue emerges now as something that possesses a moral dignity that is not diminished by the simple spontaneous emergence of impulses. The thought of one's allegiance to one's community springs from the solitary addressing of one's personality, which is not simply contingent on natural place of birth.

The moral view of the world implies the moral view of a person of herself. The knowledge of one's moral imperfection can, through aspiration, become happiness according to worth.[158] The idea of merit co-exists with the knowledge of actual imperfection; that which before was a sheltered as a hidden life in God, as Hegel puts it. But by introducing the notion of happiness as merit, Hegel also introduces the opposite idea even though he omits this problem.

Sadness as failed aspiration may assume a reiterative aspect in the moral life of a person. It may stand over and above that person's actuality as a hidden life in God – *the world of the happy man is different from that of the sad man*.

This form of sadness is beyond self-trivialization; it is beyond the simple presumption of the *frenzy of self-conceit*, but it may also present the idea of an infinite moral imperfection in terms that are less contradictory. The reiterative character of moral sadness may simply be failure to act; it possess the aspect of a personal

[156] *Phenomenology,* §656.
[157] *Phenomenology,* §655.
[158] *Phenomenology,* §609.

problem more than of a *purely* metaphysical one. Infinite sadness becomes personal failure (and this narrows down our comprehension of the thought about the *ever occurring*).

But merit can be a stop to such reiteration. The amount of happiness merit can bestow, nevertheless, is outside of any philosophical theory; this is not because it is unfathomable, but because it is simply a matter of individuality. Someone might feel sad at the thought that he is cowardly, even if he has conquered his cowardice. His merit is however ineliminable, and his sadness is something that ought only to concern him. This is a qualification I find necessary for Hegel's argument about the happiness of moral merit – the religious sentiment that accompanies aspiration is one that is not exhausted by happiness.

139. I am suggesting that the possession of both self-consciousness and the capacity to acquire the morality of a community becomes intractable the moment our concept of a moral psychology assumes a purely naturalistic aspect. Hegel does not call it a moral psychology, but simply self-consciousness. My intent is to show that a moral psychology is but one qualification upon the all-encompassing concept of self-consciousness (although this still has to become clear in the course of the argument). I say this now because addressing moral aspiration is not usually treated as an element of a moral psychology. The reason why I am assuming Hegel's religious treatment of this problematic is, however, not merely because of a textual imposition; it is conviction.

Opaqueness

140. Let us return to Aristotle's problematic about the acquisition of virtue. One thought implied by the idea of acquisition is precisely the notion of authenticity Kant casted doubts upon. What functioned in Kant as a cue to shift the paradigm of investigation of a moral science – to secure the source of the justification of morals – in Hegel becomes a problematic relation of the agent to his authenticity as a moral person. Since the voluntary is a mark of virtue, to entertain certain ends will be in accordance with the acquired character. Nevertheless, this strict dependence does not stop Aristotle from considering the argument of where certain *ends* figure *naturally* to certain agents.

His refutation through the accentuation of the idea of acquisition and exercise of character partially refutes the naturalistic argument. It removes the complete dissociation between the acquisition of virtue and the ends made possible by this acquisition. But there is an important distinction, one that brings back the plausible motive for the naturalistic argument. Actions and states are not strictly voluntary in the same way; the main difference between them is our lack of knowledge as to the *cumulative* effect of virtuous actions. This accumulation depends on the voluntary capacity of the virtuous agent to align himself with the actions that follow from virtue, but only if these actions will fortify his acquired state is initially *opaqu*e to him. [159]

141. Opaqueness, does not, however, remove the priority of clarifying the necessary consequences that follow from the acquisition argument; strictly speaking, the idea of a human function would dissolve with the dissolution of the concept of activity and leaving us with very little to start with. It is rather that we have to get a clear picture of the significance of the ongoing existence of the virtuous agent. This will be how, whatever the cumulative aspect may turn out to be, his moral worth is still responsible for the stability of his actions.

Hegel remarks on this tension in the form of a problematic equivalency. In the ethical consciousness the "immediate firmness of decision is something implicit, and therefore has at the same time the significance of a natural being."[160] But there is enough margin here for a consideration of this *firmness* as something induced and to the self-consciousness it now occupies. Inducing, in the absence of a fortifying cumulative effect, will still possess its merit from the function argument – in other words, you do not need everything you do not have, but you do need what you are lacking.

The moral worth of an individual may figure to him in the guise of *guilt*, in the active realignment with virtue in the absence of a completely natural motivational force and the removal of dissemblance.

Here we find guilt as the presence of a condemnable intention in the mind of the agent; we do not yet have guilt with respect to an action. There is a moral significance in this form guilt, and it is one Hegel addresses that introduces in the mind of the moral agent the idea of his personal *destiny*.

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[159] *Nicomachean Ethics,* pp. 39-40, 1115a.
[160] *Phenomenology of Spirit,* §465.

Guilt and Intention

142. Unlike the humiliating passiveness of fate, destiny is the burden that implies a form of reflective acknowledgment. It includes the active consideration of what intentions should be actualized. As such, the consideration of a wrong intention occupies the entire mind of the agent, as Hegel puts it, because guilt is not an *indifferent ambiguous affair.*[161] The way it occupies the moral mind is that it contains a threat to its identity and existence with others. It contains the mark of what his existence and identity will bare *from now on*.

143. This *from now on* is a constitutive principle of individual identity; for the moral mind, it is endowed with the significance of his becoming. The agent is capable of fathoming the accusations of others. He makes himself the grounds for such accusations, and is, in this reciprocal mode of thought, capable of anticipating the truthfulness of these accusations.

The anticipatory aspect of guilt is at the same time the consideration of the importance of a moral conception, and this becomes the genuine consideration of its weight. It is so from an internal perspective, from the point of view of its importance to the individual mind. As such, the reciprocal element in guilt is what lights up the value of a stable continuity among individuals.

Guilt overwhelms the individual mind, echoing a future dissociation from both others and one's moral existence. For the virtuous agent, the weight of such a point in time in his existence has the significance of self-induced instability. The deliberative certainty that arises out of the consideration of an end establishes this moment in time as actual self-determination. Knowingly committing a crime is an assertion of the non-accidental character of the deed. It offers a sense of difference to when unintended consequences arise from an action.

This is a characteristic experience of self-alienation. We may represent this as the standing over of the agent against the arising of an end in a dispositional form – this end issues from him against his moral conception.[162] It represents a loss of reality, a form of self-conception that bends to the very arising of such an end and leaves the

[161] *Phenomenology,* §468.
[162] *Phenomenology,* §471.

agent incapable of finding that his integrity lies, precisely, in the denial to confer any existence to this end.

There is a describable state of panic that consists in conceiving of the arising of such ends as fully exhaustive, as a complete determination of the moral integrity of a given individual. This particular anxiety may issue in a particular metaphysical outlook of what a person is. And this panic may be lived strictly in the first person – *'how am I capable of thinking of this, of wanting this?'*

Hegel characterized this moment as a kind of surrender, a dissolution of identity into *disposition* and *sentiment*. Of course, the point of such a characterization is to criticize what is lost. With this we further develop the moral significance of self-trivialization in a guise that is outside theological-virtue, but that appeals to the metaphysical determination that such religious sentiment morally values.

144. We find at this point that Hegel's revisionism of this Aristotelian problem[163] consists in characterizing the issue from within a self-conscious agent. In anticipation, there is a discernable fright in the putative conflation of the moral mind and a dispositional make-up. Simultaneously, this distinctive moral episode contains the evaluation of such a disposition. The postulated disposition, and the ends issuing from it, push the agent's self-conception to a sort of *substratum*, an inherent principle of identity that is responsible for inducing the fright of becoming and doing something that lies outside the bounds of one's active conscious – an impulse.

But there is a distinctive moral significance in the moment where this individual realizes that this fright amounts to a form of self-reduction. Even if the conception of a *substratum* holds true, it does not follow that this individual has eliminated taking a stance in the face of the presence of condemnable ends. From the realization that he cannot eliminate this stance follows that neither is the presence of condemnable ends an exclusive constitutive principle of his identity, nor that the presence of these ends are *without a trace* for his mind.

Aristotle posed the question of a putative dissociation between how an end appeared to the good and the bad person, and also of what was up to both equally. This dissociation, if true, cannot but force us to conceive of a relation between the voluntary element of virtue and the bad ends that naturally arise from the moral mind;

[163] *Nicomachean ethics,* p. 39, 1115a.

it cannot but force us to account equally for the responsibility of moral action and for the responsibility of self-trivialization.

145. It might be argued that it would not have to be in the guise of guilt that this problem should be addressed, that it might be conceived merely as a self-imposed restriction for an extrinsic consideration. But something is lost with the generalization of the *bad person*.

As a caricature, the bad person is absolutely oblivious – constitutively so – to our description of guilt. And we might wonder what are this person's conditions of intelligibility might look like to us. We might ask if he is even doing bad things. For this postulated agent, there is no such thing as fright in his self-apprehension as *substratum*; there is absolutely no intelligibility to the idea of acquisition or aspiration.

A person as a dispositional set is the expression of that very dispositional set, not a moral agent. A self-conscious agent is a moral agent, and possibly also a religious agent. Just like the religious nominalized agent exists exclusively in an unreal tranquility, the dispositional agent exists in unavoidable nature. For self-conscious moral agents, however, becoming is fraught with failure, and aspiration confirmed by achievement –religion is the shape of this moral sentiment, as happiness and as sadness.

Outside a religious idea, the reductive argument about the total conflation of persons and dispositional sets induces instability in the concept of responsibility. The future directedness of this agent's actions appears only marginally in its moral aspect. His future appears as dispositions to be *expressed*; his future becomes an anticipated future. But can the first personal stance – that is expressed as a personal burden in religious thinking – be fully eliminated without eliminating both answerability and commitment to responsibility?

I believe it cannot. Hence my argument cannot trivialize the radicalness of *human evil*, nor be reductive so as to override the nexus between persons and their active stance upon their respective futures. I prefer to investigate the generality of religious sentiment as an expression of the self-consciousness of morality versus the categorical generalization of full-blown vicious amoralists and heroic characters. I understand that the generality of human moral existence expressed in religions may be rather unfathomable in our time. Therefore, the argument from *responsibility*

should justify the need to further investigate the importance of self-constituting moral actions.

The Function Argument and the morality of Self-consciousness: Becoming as anticipated and as action

146. Both Aristotle and Hegel felt a lack of interest in such a postulated amoralist. For Aristotle the concept of an amoralist seems to bypass the *very* purpose of ethics; it sets an unsurpassable limit to any of the moral insights Aristotle can present. The amoralist seems to be beyond any limit we can conceive of; his *being* seems to be of a distinct kind. And we do not even have any conceivable grasp of what an amoralist would be answerable to. Where Aristotle finds an inborn capacity to aim for the good, according to that view, which is a great and fine thing, Hegel considers guilt an unavoidable burden of a moral existence – yet both of these expressions are grounded on the actuality of self-conscious action.

147. The common ground underlying these different expressions sets forward a metaphysical assumption that has appeared to the moral conscious in the form of a problematic *substratum*. In the preface to the *Phenomenology,* Hegel paraphrases Aristotle's teleology as something that contains an insight about the equivalence between reason and purposive activity. His paraphrase makes use of a metaphysical vocabulary that is altogether absent from the *Ethics* (although Hegel's assumption is contained in Aristotle's concept of acquisition as a condition of the realization of a human function).

Hegel starts his paraphrase by explaining the problematic presence of opposite concepts – *motion* and *rest* – that appear simultaneously in an explanation of purpose. Considering the subject as a fixed point, we can conceive of purpose as already lying in him, although at rest. In this sense, what follows (its movement) will be considered as *anticipated* by the postulation of the fixed point. But in this characterization, the moving is altogether excluded from being able to contribute to the content – *self-movement as anticipation is distinct from self-movement as actuality.*[164]

Moral descriptions of persons cannot dispense with the notion of *becoming,* and the value of this becoming cannot be fully rendered as anticipated. As

[164] *Phenomenology,* §23.

anticipation, I am eliminated in favor of an expression that a theorist is trying to articulate. As a moral person, I exist as achieving or failing to actualize a moral commitment, with the sentiment that attaches to the traces of those achievements or failures. The generality of the Aristotelian human function is not, if it is to capture the moral existence of persons, a theoretical vantage point capable of ordering, the so conceived, expressions of my behavior; expressions that linearly flow from *I* as anticipated – the teleology of the human function contains the idea of the self-conscious agent who lives for such an end.

In an account of the human good, Aristotle defines a human function precisely as something that requires reason. Since Aristotle severs this concept from the requisite of self-conscious activity, if a human function did not require reason, it would then render his teleological notion insubstantial as an element of a theory of a sharable human good. Hegel's argument in the *Phenomenology* is guided by the truth of this assumption, by the dangerous immediacy expressed by this type of explanation. What we have to appreciate is the need of a moral psychology to explain the significance of *moving* for something similar to us. Aristotle stressed the reiterative aspect of habituation precisely involving self-conscious reasoning, and he expressed his belief in the putative difficulties of this form of habituation.[165]

148. We can now reposition this problematic inside the function argument. This is not simply to say that the presence of moral psychology in an individual in the form of guilt proves that, as an individual, he lays outside of the function argument. What we recognize instead is a specifically moral reality in the individual's that has now abandoned a recognized function. It is not the case that he has discovered that he is not a person, but that he has acted (or wanted to act) unlike a person.

No person has the power to metamorphose themselves and therefore to abandon their function. Thus no person has the power to acquire a new mind where their actions and intentions leave absolutely no trace – Hegel revises the truth of Aristotle's function argument as the reiterative problem of a moral existence.

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[165] "For one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day; nor, similarly, does one day or a short time make us blessed and happy." *Nicomachean Ethics,* p. 9, 1098a.

The characterization of a function loses its grip on any individual if its operation is impermeable to reflection. For this reason, Aristotle stresses the fact that most activities merit study. Technical evolution inside a given activity has important differences from the activities guided by virtue, as does the notion of excellence in both cases.[166] But the stability of their achievement requires a reflective activity. In general, the stability of human achievement requires reflection such as the absence of indifference, which is the reiterative consideration of one's actions inside a given activity and as what contributes to its existence.

Aristotle's argument does not eliminate the tension between a moral psychology and a demand of virtue; it simply expresses faith in a link between reflective activity and stable existence; it is an expression that makes the virtuous agent face whatever may be the effects of habituation and the anxiety of opaqueness.

Self-conceit as distorting the moral significance of one's actions: My actions and You

149. Let us return to the idea of a kind of anxiety generated by an impediment to the conflation of authenticity and stable moral existence. We now have to consider another shape of self-consciousness, namely *the frenzy of self-conceit*.

When having to choose between the preservation of his individuality and succumbing to an alien form of necessitation, this individual this time chooses to assert his individuality as morally valid for simply being and inevitably knowing how to be that very individuality; the expression of this state of panic is the problematic tautology *'I am who I am!'*

S*elf-conceit* is the result of the apprehension of personal conflict within the moral psychology of an individual and it pushes this individual to a resolution that makes any form of recognition impossible. Authenticity becomes the main concern for the individual's moral existence.

150. As long as his intention has not been evil, his individuality can be asserted as a form of authenticity and therefore as a form of morality. This vision is a retreat from the nullifying effect of *tranquility* (the realization that an individual cannot be a mere prospective act). But the existence of the individual in this particular

[166] *Nicomachean ethics*, p. 9, 1098a.

state is fraught with the panic of a realization that morality, as constitutive of his identity, will be overthrown by the accusations made by another person.

The moral psychology of this individual experiences a difficulty in finding a place to accommodate thoughts about the alignment of his existence with a shared moral *outlook on life*. He experiences, therefore, the difficulty of reappraising certain non-intended effects of intended acts. Hence, this agent regards knowledge of his intentions as incompatible with the importance of his intentions for others. This disruption removes our ability to consider his actions as having a significance that will contrast with his knowledge of his intentions – he cannot learn from others.

For example, someone who likes to tell jokes may be confronted with the fact that his jokes are not funny at all and may even be bothersome. He may feel offended and he may resist this by explaining that he never intended to bother anyone: he was just being the warm and congenial host he is – a warm and congenial host is who he is. An accusation contrary to this threatens his personality as an expectation about a change in behavior that he should bring about in himself.

We apprehend the moral significance of *self-conceit* in this example. This stage of moral conscience does not strictly represent a rejection, but rather development from a naturalistic conception of virtue. This individual no longer maintains that the possession of a heart is sufficient for morality; his self-assertion is the result of when the validity of a general law collapses – he becomes merely himself, which is merely what he does and his guilt.

When faced with the attribution of a wrong motive to one of his actions, this individual resists the elimination of himself by asserting his authentic motive. The virtuous agent is expected to resist elimination via false attribution (which is an exercise of his *right of intention*). And there is a moral salience in the difference between this form of resistance and the ironic agent who, out of intelligence, manipulates the expectation of education in his favor. It is precisely this idea of earnest resistance that Hegel wants to preserve in the discussion of *self-conceit*.

If his actual actions are to have a *revelatory* aspect that lies outside the realm of his intentions, this individual has to accept that evaluations are for the reappraisal of his realized actions.

So we find in the concluding phase of *self-conceit* the initial problematic of motivation. An individual's self-conceit has to dissociate itself from an existence with others in order to preserve the individual's authenticity. Others may critique the

individual's motivations, and the effects of the individual's actions. But these will have little relevance for the individual because these critiques cannot integrate into the individual's identity.

If a person's moral worth is not naturally granted at the outset, it cannot be constituted by realignment; the person's moral psychology however flawed is after all who that person truly is. Such an agent finds himself as isolated as the agent who lives for the satisfaction of his own desires.

But the position the agent finds himself in cannot undo the recognition of others, even if this recognition seems to be nothing but a threat – it is too late to simply eliminate others. This introduces a different perspective on both intentions and the identity of this individual. This agent's protective stance may degenerate into a pretense to eliminate a second person: '*My actions are not of Your concern'* and *'You cannot threaten Me'*. He loses the capacity to reappraise his actions, such as to forego repeating a certain action. He is also unable to prospectively intend acts that are external to his isolated existence or that have a concern that is not strictly expressive of self-interest.

'I am worried about you' as a distinctive moral reciprocal attitude – non-elimination

151. In this sense, the agent who succumbs to *self-conceit* is incapable of any reciprocal mode of thought. The fear of elimination is found in a moral aspiration for authenticity as a desire to maintain an intact vision of *one's self*. But this sort of agent fails to realize a specific reciprocal attitude that is not a threat to his elimination, which is namely concern.

This may be someone who is concerned with that agent, and does not wish to eliminate his particular individuality. Concern consists in a form of appraisal of the actions of another person that relies on their intelligibility and issues from the putative explanations of this very agent – concern is constitutively reciprocal.

What is fallible about concern is its possible non-application, such as the possibility of a misguided advice. The agent who succumbs to self-conceit can hardly appreciate the concern others might have for his actions; concern as worry would have to assume the guise of a threat. In this isolation, the agent realizes his particularity as issuing from him, but deprives himself of recognition.

For Hegel, this becomes the moral issue of understanding a fundamental aspect of a moral mind: recognition cannot abstract from the connection between consciousness of one's actions and what these actions mean to others. For example, in the case of concern, what we may find (such as in the form of an advice) is the supplementation of the knowledge of one's action with something that is crucial for a complete picture of the significance of this very action; this may be information about an unintended consequence of this action, or the suggestion of a better way or that one should forego doing something altogether.

When someone worries about another person, the worrying is directed at this person. And the direction of moral concern may reveal a limit to the person who worries. It may become apparent that one's advice is misguided, or that one lacks the power to help. Concern survives then as the hope that the other person will find a way of doing the right thing for herself or, for example, that the person will pass an exam – these are reciprocal attitudes that are *strictly* not eliminativistic.

152. The attitude of worrying necessarily attaches value to acknowledging the existence of another and to the appropriateness of a choice made by another, but it also expresses a sentiment about how inadequate a certain attitude might be for the agent himself. The expression *I am worried about You* expresses this cluster of concerns in a non-eliminativist way, and there is a distinct moral worth that survives even its fallibility; there is such a thing as worrying too much over nothing.

Self-conceit implies a form of isolation that holds moral significance insofar as this agent is capable of dignifying all of his actions as irreducible authentic expressions of his character. But once we consider a putative agent who holds this attitude, but lacks this sort of isolation, we find significant friction. Consider, for example, the following case: Someone who asks another person to stop trying to do a particular action and says: "Well I am only trying to help you, that is what I am doing." In reply, the other person says: "Well, I understand that, so stop helping me then!"

The agent who holds the attitude of *self-conceit* towards his actions cannot appraise his actions as possessing a reality that is beyond what he intended. He has to eschew the description of the other person. But can he genuinely be said to worry about the other person if he considers her statements in reply as irrelevant, if he refuses to reconsider his earnest concern as harmful?

There are specific moral problems that result from reciprocal attitudes. These problems require the circumstantial intelligence Aristotle thought was part of a definition of virtue.

Hegel recognizes this sort of practical necessity as an element of a conception of practical reasoning:

> Now, the judging consciousness does not stop short at the former aspect of duty, at the doer's knowledge of it, that this is his duty, and at the fact that the doer knows it to be his duty, the condition and status of his reality. On the contrary, it holds to the other aspect, looks at what the action is in itself, and explains it as resulting from an *intention* different from the action itself, and from selfish *motives*.[167]

The moral precept is *explained*, as Hegel puts it, by the judging consciousness. The agent who holds an attitude of *self-conceit* would be horrified at the idea that it was out of selfishness that he tried to hold on to his reality. But Hegel points out the realization made by a moral consciousness that understands the declaration of its self-sentiment to be second to the effectiveness of genuine moral action.

This sort of self-explanation of an action rescues this agent from the threat of isolation. In this sense, there is a connection between individual practical reflection and practical reasoning in Hegel's argument. There is a connection that has to be explained by the agent himself, between his future actions and moral apprehension in situations of conflict.

To worry about someone is a distinctive reciprocal attitude in the sense that it cannot ignore the actual effects particular actions have – to apprehend that the effects of *my* actions are not independent of their effects *on others*. And this lays the groundwork for the notion of personal dignity.

153. Self-conceit panics at the actual dissociation between individual moral consciousness and the actual world – as if the world had revealed itself to betray its own dignity. But this reveals to the agent that virtue requires more than the individual importance of one's acts.

Part of the humiliation of *self-conceit* relies in the recognition that one does not cease to be checked by others with respect to the significance of one's actions.

[167] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §665.

This person realizes that he is not impermeable to what specifically results from his existence along with others and how this particular mode of existence makes demands on him.

The return of faith from alienation is analogous to the return of the confessor. And in each case, the humiliation suffered is essential to the constitution of individual identity.

The undisturbed, individual moral existence faith initially conceives has to apprehend its self-constituting power as completely independent of a world and others. This individual conception is a form of alienated existence; it generates a world where it does not exist as a happening, but as a purely unimpeded prospect.

This return implies the reconciliation of real existence and aspiration. To feel humiliation is a result of an existence that is conceived as *being-for-others* and not merely for oneself.

Reassurance and Reiteration

154. To establish continuity with other members of one's political community is a form of reassurance and is the culmination of the Hegelian political argument. This form of reassurance does not exclude non-exemplar members; it is not a form of moral perfectionism.

It is rather the presentation of a form of revelation about freedom and equality. Far from reducing the understanding of the concept of freedom to *I could have done otherwise,* the continuous existence with others during a particular time implies a particular mode of existence.

155. Reassurance is the self-conscious reflection on the actual values of communal life. The confessional relation contains the reiterative aspect that interests Hegel in the constitution of a *Sittlichkeit*. Since we are now addressing the thought that communal life is bound to encounter limits in the form of conflict and in acknowledgment of its particular history that contained the use violence as power.

Faith in the possibility of a genuinely expressive *Sittlickeit* is very different from reverence for a set of self-contained political ideas that are presented as justified. The contrast between a problematic present and the optimism for a bright future is qualified in the Hegelian philosophy of history. The future faith aspires to is not purely anticipated future, in the same sense that moral agents are not anticipated

persons. Faith has to survive within the historical situation that is occupied by actual persons. Within history, faith can be both threatened by the false justifications of the *way of the world* or the moral conflict within political communities and amongst different political communities.

This is the final positive realization of faith: the removal of the accusation of *dissemblance*. Faith is capable of distinct action; it has pulled itself out of an aspiration for a condition of pureness it cannot achieve and it has been forced to recognize in the confessor the discernable moral problematic of its aspiration for perfection – Faith no longer retreats into *unhappy consciousness* in order to sustain its exemplar imitation.

156. The investigation of the *idea of men*, so conceived, reveals that the reiterative character of a conception of *how one should live* that contains actual agents. Hegel argues that the confessor exhibits the self-conscious desire to return to a community by finding the measure of his action in a sharable conception of *how one should live*.

This particular gesture represents the desire for recognition. To remove the *Hard Heart* is the final acceptance of mankind's imperfection, although not simply as an element of an *empirical limited mankind*. Rather, the *Hard Heart* is seen as a genuine impediment, correlated with the fact that self-alienation implies alienation from one's communal existence.

In the act of refusing recognition, what becomes apparent is not merely the moral dignity the *Hard Heart* exhibits – a form of, indeed, of justified intransigence – but also the immediate frustration of genuine reconciliation. The religious attitude of the act of forgiveness consists in the recognition that the dignity of mankind lies beyond a consideration of utility or a general appeal to reasonableness.

157. Conflict within a community often assumes a historical turning point for that community, like a communal form of *from now on*. For example the situation of war, where there is a demand for aligning an individual's action with the service of protecting a community. In this particular situation, an individual may experience alienation from his community; he may experience his community as being the reason that he risks his life and what potentially puts an end to his life. In the moral psychology of this individual, these thoughts would figure to him as dissociative

thoughts, as a retreat into his individual existence or as fear of an unacceptable limit to his individual existence.

Sacrifice appears in the Hegelian moral vocabulary as a particular phenomenon of the *idea of men*. The decision to embrace the non-dissociation from one's community is inconceivable without a particular individual cost. The morality of a given situation relies precisely on the evaluation of given actions in the face of intelligible individual threat. To go to war does not exemplify a contribution of the agent to his individual *outlook on life*; strictly speaking, it lies at a problematic limit of this conception and it putatively represents the *end* of the agent's life.

This extreme form of demand gives us part of the sense of reassurance, insofar as the notion of *sacrifice* does not remove the problematic relation of the agent with the action that is demanded of him. But we may suppose that this demand would be absolutely unbearable if we did not conceive of this form of reassurance as representing faith in the survival of one's community, as meeting one's sense of justice, as something worth saving. If there is a genuine difference between risking one's life *because*... and being made to risk one's life, there is enough space to discern these distinct attitudes in relation to one's community in spite of the presence of individual fear.

At this point, the argument seems to introduce a demand for a return attached to one's allegiance. But how can we conceive of this demand otherwise considering the *self-image of men* we have put forward? Can we simply remove the critical relation individuals have with their community? Can we simply suppose that communal life is completely exempt from the accusation that it can induce alienation?

158. Rousseau thought that it was far more admirable to go to war and promise to return as a conqueror than to simply swear to conquer or die.[168] What is condemnable about the last attitude is not only its lack of confidence and tactical value, but also the presence of one as an individual in that very thought.

This presence implies one's frailty when facing the given situation. The task to return as a conqueror does not override this sense of one's individual existence, nor does the relation of particular individuals to their actions even when done *for* a community. In Rousseau's suggestion, the individual who exclusively swears to

[168] *Social Contract*, p. 184.

conquer, to transcend their own individuality in thought, becomes the embodiment of their nation's purpose.

Rousseau seems to be appealing to a justification of communal activity that transcends anything that could figure as an item of a recognizable moral psychology (recognizable to any of us, that is).

Rousseauian soldiers have no second guesses about the motives of their actions, no fear, and no opinions about the motives of their nations: they have no conscience at all. They are an example of unrestricted identification with a necessity of their nation, which is a necessity impermeable to justification. They have obliterated themselves altogether in favor of a pure collective act.

This, in turn, wipes out any threat of alienation. I am suggesting that a political theory incapable of capturing the concept of alienation is also incapable of aspiring to the allegiance of its members. The ideal Rousseauian soldier, like the ideal Bolshevik revolutionary, does not conceive of the threat of alienation; or alternatively, its alienation does not represent a moral problem for him. The situation of war does, however, represent a special case for the study of morality. The thought of unconditional allegiance Rousseau aspires to demands a unilateral view of history. It sees history as nothing but the *coming to be* of one particular nation under one particular political conception. As such, war, be it civil or amongst nations, exercises freedom negatively and absolutely by overriding the historical sense of both property and individual – property and persons become obstacles to a particular idea. [169]

Abrasive perfectionism represents the complete absence of reconciliation: the degeneration of absolute freedom into terror.

Terror as detachment from the constitutive history of a community

159. Terror is the exemplification of reverence for nothing more than a particular political idea that is to be realized. When the unifying measure of aspiration established by faith (its realized self-image) is absent, it creates a *faction* that claims to be in possession of an imperative that is beyond recognition.

Terror is the realization of immoral actions for a just cause. The idea of equality becomes a form of annihilation of the opposite faction. Obviously, the idea of reconciliation is immediately frustrated. But the point of Hegel's analysis is to show

[169] *Phenomenology,* §475.

the genuine possibility of a misinterpretation of the concept of *power*: political terror carries out the equivalence between an act of freedom and truth without restrictions.

At this stage, Hegel is careful in his interpretation of this phenomenon: absolute freedom, as in the generation of terror, belongs to a conception of freedom that is purely prospective. It does not take into consideration the dignity of individuals who protected the former form of life, the previous mode of existence that has now self-consciously realized a limitation – *it ignores its own history*.

160. The idea of forgiveness appears here as a central concept for the genuine possibility of co-existence in a future form of life. Of course, we are far from the interpersonal model of confession. But the association between the content of faith, derived from the real existing world, and the pure will of freedom, come together for individuals who are able to understand their autonomy not only in the service of a future mode of life, but also as a form of responsibility for the recognition of each other.[170]

In this sense, the Hegelian analysis of *terror* is both the moral apprehension of a violent tendency when humans reconsider their *self-image* and the insight that this very apprehension implies a particular moral demand. The assertive aspect of a *faction* simply constitutes allegiance to the new principles put forward as the measure of recognition: people are reduced to mere obstacles to the realization of an archetype; only those who *believe* are recognized.

The important precept is at this stage the reconciliation that involves forgiveness as an expression of Faith in the possibility of a genuinely just political community that does not ignore the history of its constitution. What starts out, in the *Phenomenology*, as an argument regarding the interpretation of the complexity of a moral psychology (the constitution of the *idea of men*), becomes the rehabilitation of *hope as a social virtue.*[171]

This rehabilitation presupposes the benefits of the exercise of such virtue for the wellbeing of a political community. Forgiveness within a political community is a form of apprehending its history. It actualizes a form of cognition that a *faction* eliminates. Resentment may persist, and there may be categorical political divergences within a political community. But hope and forgiveness, as well as a form

[170] *Phenomenology,* §595.
[171] *Marxism and Christianity*, p.116.

of non-perfectionist recognition, are virtues that, if in complete absence, destroy any political community from within.

The dignity of humans has to be apprehended as the history of realized morality, and the history of political modes of life. The idea that the revolution of the nineteenth-century should derive its poetry from the future does not imply a justification of terror.

Concluding remarks

161. *I trust those who worry about me, I trust those who forgive me*. Only those who have understood the danger of indifference, who have come to understand their dependence on others, can utter this. But I do not write this from the absence of indifference, on the contrary, I write this in the face of indifference.

We do recognize in human history both the mourning of power and the occasional witnessing of forgiveness. History does bear witness to our indifference to a human vocation, a vocation we at times intuit, but do not always act on. It is still a condemnation to be born in certain parts of the world as it is to be born to a certain class or creed. Tyrannies are still built on resentment, wealth is still built on indifference towards its evident devastation and democratic progress is still impaired by the lack of respect towards other's beliefs. Indifference is, perhaps, the last resource of power to protect itself from the accusations that are due to it.

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